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FOREVER SILENT.

BY H. A. FRANCOIS.

Forever silent:
No more shall we hear the familiar voice,
That used to echo through the hall;
No more shall we hear the merry laugh,
That shed its merriment over all;
It is silent forever.

Forever silent:
The icy hand of death hath plucked
A lovely child. Not long the dear,
Fond object of the mother's pride,
Was enfolded in her arms here;
He is silent forever.

Forever silent:
A youth! but yesterday to be seen
O'erflowing with vitality;
His joyful playmates round him. Pray,
Can this be a reality?
That he is silent forever?

Forever silent:
Yes!—his soul here was one
Abundant in life's joys alone;
To him did Death's quivering voice,
Cause all life's woes to be unknown;
He is silent forever.

Forever silent:
No! That young man, proud, ambitious,
To attain some far and glorious goal,
Pressing on, close on to manhood—
No! That man, mer-ri-ty, a story,
That he is silent forever!

Forever silent:
Lies!—Twas Death, with icy finger,
Brought him down from her throne;
Of him also, though so hopeful,
The same thing must be said again—
He is silent forever.

Forever silent:
To-day engaged in trafficking,
The man of middle age has been;
To-morrow—the wonder of the town—
The question is asked mid business din,
Is he silent forever?

Forever silent:
Proceeding slowly through the town,
Death lent—thou wert with solemn tread;
Him friend and kindred mourned, bear
To where repose the mouldering dead;
He is silent forever.

Forever silent:
The never-sleeping hand of time
Hath scattered wrinkles on the brow
Of this old man. The silvery locks,
The feeble frame, tell plainly how
He'll be silent forever.

Forever silent:
The morn, the noon, of his existence
Passed long since; the night's come on;
And now he trembles, tottering falls;
One gasp, one shudder, and 'tis done;
He is silent forever.

Forever silent:
To us 'tis so; those lips are sealed;
To us is left the body—dead;
But to its Maker, Glorious Lord,
The soul, immortal, quickly sped;
That's not silent forever.

The White Witch:

OR,
THE LEAGUE OF THREE.
A STRANGE STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.
AUTHOR OF "HEART OF FIRE," "WOLF DEMON,"
"SCARLET HAND," "AGE OF SPIDERS," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LEAGUE OF THREE.

MONTGOMERY could not understand the meaning of the strange scene that met his eyes as he looked through the window upon the balcony.

A moment he gazed in speechless astonishment, and then turned to question his companion; but, to his amazement, he found that he was alone. The White Witch was gone.

"This seems like a dream!" Montgomery cried, perplexed; "but, if she is in the ball-room, I'll find her."

Then he instantly proceeded on his quest. Vainly he searched amid the groups of maskers. No White Witch could he find.

Tulip and Stoll found O'Connell on the balcony.

The young Irishman was leaning against the railing, apparently in deep thought.

O'Connell raised his head as the two approached. He had removed the clownish mask, with its huge nose, from his face, and the moonbeams lighted up his pale and clearly-cut features.

In face, the young Irishman was singularly handsome. The keen, blue eye, the firm-set, resolute mouth told of a determined will. Over his forehead clustered little, crispy curls, a rich gold in hue, and a long, drooping mustache, of the same tint as the hair, hid his full, sensual lips.

As Stoll and Tulip approached, they also removed the masks from their faces.

The face of Tulip was as pale as death, except where a hectic flush burned in either cheek; while Stoll's coarse features were crimsoned with anger.

There was a lurking devil in O'Connell's eye as he watched the approach of the two. "Well?" he said, quietly, as the two came up to him.

"You're a true prophet," replied Stoll, in a sulky way.

"And my words in regard to the fair Frances?" O'Connell asked of Tulip.

"True, every one," replied the "blood," with an angry gesture.

"And now you seek my aid?"

"Yes," replied Stoll, quickly, and Tulip bowed his head in the affirmative.

"Good, and now let us have a clear understanding."

"The sooner the better," said Stoll.

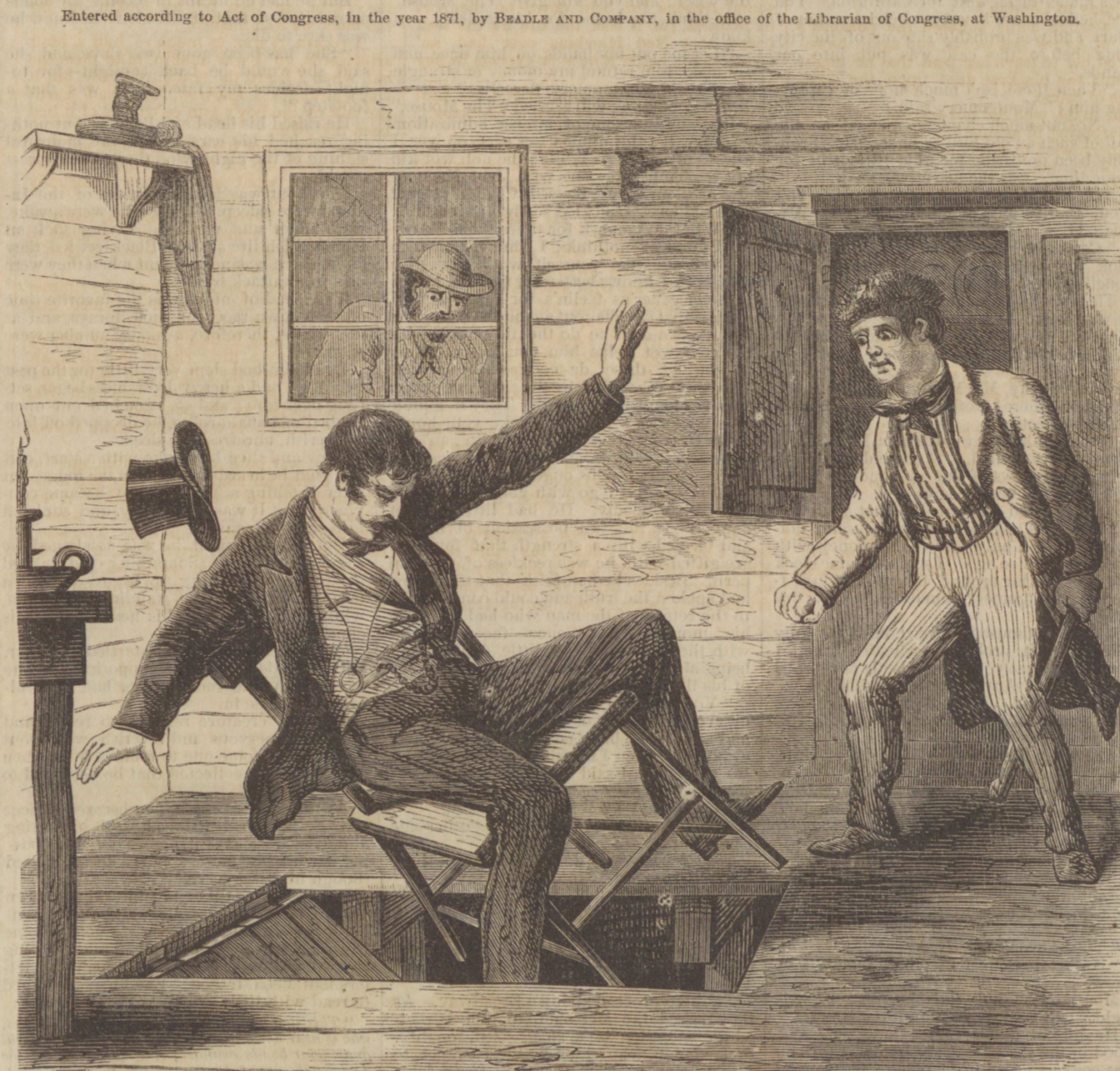
"We three hate this one man?"

"Yes," replied Tulip and Stoll, in a breath.

"And our purpose is to pull him down—to ruin him if we can?"

"Yes," again they replied.

"And therefore we form a League of Three. Montgomery is to be ruined. And



Suddenly the floor under Montgomery gave way. He was entrapped.

to effect our object we will use any and all means, be the means fair or foul."

"Exactly," Stoll said.

"Montgomery is rich, honored and beloved. We must steal his riches from him, tarnish his good name, and deprive him of the woman of his heart."

"That's the programme," said Stoll, coarsely.

Tulip said nothing, but his eyes signified his assent.

"And as to the victors belong the spoils, we must arrange a fair division of what is to come to us from the ruin of this man."

First comes Frances Chauncy, for the possession of a beautiful woman—to the man that loves her—outweighs all else in this world. You, Tulip, shall have Montgomery's promised bride. Then comes his money; that shall be equally divided between Herman, here, and myself. Is the division satisfactory, gentlemen?"

"Perfectly," said Tulip.

"Quite square," responded Stoll.

"Now for the sinews of war—money. I think that it is but fair that you two should furnish that, since I have furnished the idea."

"Yes, that's only fair," said Stoll, after a moment's thought.

"How much do you require?" Tulip asked.

"Six thousand dollars; that will do for the present. We must have tools, gentlemen, and human instruments, such as we shall have to use, will cost money. The task we have undertaken will be no child's play," O'Connell said, seriously.

"The sum is little enough. I, myself, would rather give six thousand than have Frances Chauncy become the wife of Angus Montgomery," Tulip exclaimed, earnestly.

"And you still want this girl who has proved false to you?" O'Connell asked.

"Yes, I do not blame her, but him. She is young, does not know her own mind, and he, in some way, has dazzled her senses," Tulip replied.

"Then it is perfectly understood: the girl to you, the money to us?"

Both nodded assent.

"Then we may consider ourselves a League of Three, each pledged to aid the other to the utmost extent of his power—even to the risk of life—in this, our enterprise," O'Connell said.

"But, shall we go as far as to think of attempting the life of this man?" Stoll asked, with a dark look upon his coarse features.

"No," replied O'Connell, quickly. "We will not strike at his life. We will strip him of all else, but his life shall be sacred from our hands."

"It is better so," said Tulip.

"Well, just as you please," Stoll observed, carelessly.

"The money will be ready to-morrow?" O'Connell asked.

"Of course," Tulip replied, and Stoll nodded assent.

"Then to-morrow the League will commence operations."

"What are you going to do first?" asked Stoll.

"That requires consideration," replied O'Connell, with a light laugh. "It is no easy matter to ruin a man with a hundred thousand dollars, and above all, such a man as Angus Montgomery—a cool, clear-headed fellow, who is neither a 'flat' nor a fool. If he were a fast young man now, our task would be easy enough. We could lure him on to play and by the blackleg's aid fleece him of his money."

"He doesn't indulge in such pleasures," said Tulip.

"And therefore our task is a difficult one. It is easy to say, 'we three hate this man and we will ruin him,' but to accomplish that ruin is quite another thing."

"Very true," Stoll said, thoughtfully.

"Now, in the first place, what is Montgomery really worth?" asked O'Connell.

"Somewhere about a hundred thousand; his wealth is greatly exaggerated," replied Tulip.

"That is not uncommon. What does his wealth consist of?"

"A house on the avenue—"

"Worth how much?" interrupted O'Connell.

"About thirty thousand."

"And the lot itself?"

"From twelve to fifteen thousand."

"Then, if the house should burn down, he would be out about fifteen thousand."

"No," replied Tulip, "it is nearly all covered by insurance."

"Possibly there is a way to get over that," O'Connell said, thoughtfully. "And the rest of his property?"

"Invested in government bonds, railroad stock, etc."

"Our scheme will require some head-work, but in the end we will triumph. I shall go to New York by the first train to-morrow. There I will secure my principal instrument."

"Some smart, keen-witted man that you know, eh?" Stoll asked.

"No, quite the contrary," said O'Connell, smiling. "My instrument is a young and pretty woman."

"A woman!" his companions exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Exactly."

"What part will she play in our scheme?" asked Stoll, amazed.

"That of the false beacon-light, which, in the darkness of the night, lured the tempest-tossed mariner to the reefs whereon his vessel is wrecked," replied the Irishman, quickly.

"Oh, I see; this woman is to fascinate Montgomery," said Tulip.

"I fear that it will be a difficult task," Stoll observed, thoughtfully. "If report speaks true, Montgomery is in love with Frances Chauncy."

"That may be true, but that love will not save him from the snare that my instrument will weave around his soul. The woman, whose will I control, is more beautiful than this New York bells, for she has all the fire

and passion that Frances Chauncy lacks, and has fully as pretty a face. Trust me, her arts will win him, despite his love for the other girl."

"Who is this woman?" asked Stoll.

"That is my secret," replied O'Connell, with one of his peculiar, baffling smiles.

"I get the idea!" cried Stoll, suddenly.

"You intend to use this money that we have contributed to buy the services of this woman."

"No, there you are wrong. There isn't money enough in all New York to buy this woman's will. If there was—if she could be bought by money—she would be useless for our purpose," said O'Connell, gravely.

"Why then is she willing to serve you?" asked Stoll, bluntly.

"That is my secret, too," replied O'Connell.

"Suffice it, that she will do as I say. The money I shall use for the details of my plan, not to pay her for her services."

"And you have no doubt of success?" asked Tulip.

"Not the slightest," replied O'Connell, confidently; "within a year at most, Angus Montgomery will be a ruined man."

"Good!" exclaimed Stoll, rubbing his hands together in glee, while a dark smile came over Tulip's delicate features.

"The League then is formed. Mind, we are sworn to aid one another in our purpose, even to death, for all three of us may have to stain our hands in crime to accomplish our object," said O'Connell, with a serious face.

"I fully understand that for one," said Stoll, firmly.

"And so do I," added Tulip.

"Gentlemen, I foresaw that we should agree in this matter and so I drew out a memorandum—a special partnership between us three." Then O'Connell drew a folded paper from his pocket. He opened it and read aloud:

"We three do hereby unite in a solemn League against our common enemy. We hereby agree, each to aid the other in the attacks to be made upon him. And we swear, that with our own hands, we will kill any one of this League who shall prove false to the compact. We seal the oath with our blood."

Stoll and Tulip looked at each other.

"Are we to sign this?" asked Stoll, slowly.

"With your written signatures, no; that would be dangerous should the paper happen to be lost," replied O'Connell; "our signatures to this paper and our seals will be three drops of blood; one drop from each. That binds us to the compact. We spill our blood to seal it, and we'll spill the blood of the one that breaks it. Is this satisfactory?"

"Yes," said Stoll.

"Perfectly," Tulip added.

Then O'Connell dropped upon his knee and spread the paper out before him. He drew a little penknife from his pocket and with the point of the blade, made a slight puncture in his wrist.

A single drop of blood welled slowly from the slight scratch.

"Come, gentlemen, the seals!" he cried; "three drops of blood!"

Then with the point of the knife he stained the paper with the blood.

Stoll and Tulip followed his example.

Then the paper, thus strangely signed and sealed, was conveyed to O'Connell's pocket again.

"This oath that we have sworn sounds like a romance," O'Connell said, "but before a month is over, Angus Montgomery will find that it is bitter reality."

Then they returned to the ball-room.

The League of Three was formed.

CHAPTER VIII. THE INSTRUMENT.

THE first train out of Newport, on the morning following the night wherein the events related in our last chapters took place, among its passengers, carried Tulip, Roche, Herman Stoll and Lionel O'Connell.

They were en route for New York.

The League of Three was preparing to strike its first blow at Angus Montgomery.

On the journey, Tulip and Stoll noticed that their companion was strangely silent.

But by the earnest look upon his handsome face, they guessed that his brain was busy in devising how to bring their common enemy to grief.

As the three arrived in New York and alighted from the car, a newsboy by the depot was crying his "Extras."

"Here's the hextra Telegram—full account of the mysterious disappearance of Edward Catlin, the Wall street banker!"

As the cry of the boy reached Tulip's ears, he grasped O'Connell by the arm, and an expression of joy flushed his pale features.

"Do you hear that?" he cried.

"What?" asked O'Connell, in astonishment.

"What the boy is crying," answered Tulip, quickly. "Here, boy, give me a paper!"

The boy received his money, handed over the sheet and departed to cry his papers elsewhere.

Tulip's eyes searched the news column eagerly.

"Here it is!" Then he read aloud to his listening companions.

"Sudden and mysterious disappearance of the well-known Wall street banker, Mr. Edward Catlin. This gentleman has not been seen since he left his office in Wall street yesterday afternoon, about four o'clock. It has been whispered on the 'street' for some time that Mr. Catlin was in difficulties, pecuniarily, he having been one of the sufferers on the memorable 'Black Friday,' when the gold bubble exploded. It is rumored that his paper to a large amount came due to-day, and being unable to meet it, he has fled where 'the woodbine weaveth.' A painful rumor is also afloat that Mr. Catlin has committed suicide. The truth will probably be known in a few days. Quite a number who banked with Mr. Catlin will suffer by the event."

"This is glorious news!" cried Tulip, in joy, after he had finished the brief notice relative to the disappearance of the banker.

"I don't understand," said O'Connell.

"Nor I!" Stoll chimed in.

"Why, fate itself is on our side and strikes the first blow at our foe."

"Excellent."

"This man who has fled, leaving his creditors in the lurch, is the banker of Angus Montgomery," cried Tulip, in triumph.

His two companions now understood the reason of his joy, and their faces, too, brightened up.

"You think then that Montgomery will be a sufferer by the flight of the banker?" O'Connell asked.

"I know that he will," Tulip replied, quickly. "Only a week ago I came to the city with him, and he placed twenty thousand dollars in this Catlin's hands."

"Then the probabilities are that Mr. Angus Montgomery is just twenty thousand dollars poorer by this little mischance," Stoll said, in scornful tone.

"Yes," Tulip replied.

"So much the better," said O'Connell, cheerfully, "it lightens our work, that is if they don't happen to catch the banker and make him disgorge."

"Not much chance of that, the man is probably safe off by this time," Tulip observed.

"I wonder if the police are on his track," said Stoll.

Tulip glanced at the newspaper.

"Yes; it says that the detectives are on the look-out for him."

"And extremely unlikely to catch him," remarked O'Connell, contentiously. "It is only the common ruffian that they secure. The man with brains escapes them nine times out of ten."

"Montgomery will arrive in town to-morrow. Will you fix upon a plan of action to-night?" Tulip asked of O'Connell.

"Yes," he answered. "I'll meet you at the Fifth Avenue Hotel to-morrow at ten in the morning. I shall proceed to the house of the lady, who is to play the role of Delilah and shear this modern Sampson of his locks of strength, at once."

"There is no doubt about securing her?"

"None at all," O'Connell answered, confidently. "She will do my bidding, I am sure of it. Once the eyes of Montgomery fall upon her face, good-by to his love for Frances Chauncy."

"In the morning at ten?"

"Yes."

And so the three parted. The triple League. Three men, so unlike each other in every respect, yet bound together by the hatred that they had in common for Angus Montgomery. Links of steel were as chains to the strength of that bond.

Tulip and Stoll went up the avenue, while O'Connell passed through Twenty-seventh street to Broadway.

As O'Connell turned into the busy thor-

oughfare, he came face to face with a little, dapper fellow, with a round, bullet-like head, who was slowly coming up Broadway, sucking a quill toothpick between his teeth in a manner indicative of profound enjoyment.

O'Connell, proceeding rapidly along, turned the corner sharply, and nearly ran over the man with the quill toothpick.

With a careless "I beg pardon," the young man turned to one side and passed on down the street.

The man with the quill toothpick stood like one turned to stone, and gazed after O'Connell with a face full of wonder. The toothpick dropped from his mouth, and lay unheeded upon the pavement.

"Well, jigger my buttons!" said the man, with a low whistle of astonishment. "It is—and then again, it may not be. If it is—will I, or won't I? Who knows? Now, that's philosophy, that is. In the first place, I must keep one eye on him."

Then the man missed his toothpick, and discovered it on the sidewalk.

"Now, meeting this 'ere nobby chap has cost me a brand-new toothpick; suppose that the same little incident costs him his life? That's a riddle. I give it up."

Then the man drew another quill toothpick from his vest-pocket, placed it between his teeth, and followed in chase of O'Connell.

The young man had not given the stranger a second thought, but hastened onward, his mind busy with the meeting that was before him. He had no suspicion that his steps were watched so closely.

O'Connell went down Broadway to Tenth street; went down Tenth street a few blocks, then ascended the steps of a three-story brick dwelling, rung the bell, and shortly after was admitted into the house.

The man with the toothpick had followed him carefully on the other side of the street. When the young man entered the house, the watcher closed one eye and gazed with a knowing look at the dwelling.

"Ten to one that he don't live here! Ten to one that he'll come out! Ten to one that it's the bird, although 't'other bird had black hair, and this 'un the color of a cornstalk. Maybe he's dyed it. Why not? Don't the blonde actresses who make a living by displaying their legs—'cos they ain't got any brains—don't they dye? Of course! Why shouldn't he? Rayther! De-lightful prospect this is, round here. Guess I'll wait for a few hours, days, or so. Pippan, old boy, I shake hands with you!" And then the odd genius shook hands with himself violently.

Now, I'll just wait, and while I wait, I'll keep my eyes open; as a Pacific sloop would say, you bet!"

The man with the quill toothpick selected a doorstep a little way up the street, sat down on it, and commenced humming a song to himself. What the words of the verses were wasn't very clear, but the chorus came out strong:

"Ti-ra-ra, ti-ra-ra, ti-ra-ra!"

He has entered one of the back chambers of the three-story brick, and a young girl has risen to receive him.

The room is furnished plainly, and amid its somber hue the beauty of the girl shines like a rich jewel in a leaden setting.

The girl looked some twenty years of age. In figure she was about the medium height, and as straight as the pine-tree, yet all the supple grace of the swaying willow was in every motion. Her face was a classical one—pure Greek; the nose, straight and fine; the rounded chin; the straight nose; the dainty lips, red as the carnation flower, and perfect in their sweet outline; the little pearl-like teeth that the red lips guarded; the lustrous black eyes, that could flash with all the fires of passion's rage or melt with all the softness of love's tenderness; the transparent skin, white as alabaster; the long, silken hair, black as the raven's wing, and coiled in shining braids around the shapely, well-poised head—all was perfection itself.

The face of the girl was one not seen once in a thousand years. A face that a painter might see in a vision, when he dreamed of angels' forms.

She was dressed plainly in dark-crimson stuff. A little white linen collar and cuffs of the same material were the only adornments she wore.

As O'Connell looked at her, he could not help confessing to himself that he had never seen a more lovely girl.

She was called Leone Basque; by profession a music-teacher.

O'Connell was apparently her only friend, for he alone visited her, and the gossip of the boarding-house—for such was the character of the house that O'Connell had entered—whispered that the young man was probably a lover of Miss Leone's, and in due time would become her husband.

"Well," the girl asked, in icy tones, rising as her visitor entered the room.

"Why, Leone, your tone is as cold as the wind on a winter's morning," said O'Connell, carelessly throwing himself into a chair.

"Is it?" replied the girl, resuming her seat.

"Yes; but, bless you, I don't mind it in the least. Leone, there is a great deal of the angel about you, and a great deal of the old gentleman down below, when you let your temper get the best of you."

"You have no cause to say that!" cried the girl, quickly. "I have done more for you than one-half the women in this world would do."

"Yes, I know that," O'Connell replied, languidly. "But once in a while you give me a terrible talking to."

"When you bind any one's hands, what can they use but the tongue?" asked the girl, bitterly.

"That's very true. I suppose, then, that you mean that I have bound your hands, figuratively speaking."

"Yes, with an iron chain," returned the girl, sadly.

"Well, I am glad that you fully understand that fact. That knowledge on your part will save me considerable trouble," said O'Connell, coolly.

"I do not understand what you mean."

The girl spoke slowly, and her face showed plainly that she was puzzled.

"Oh, I'm going to explain my meaning fully," said O'Connell, quickly. "In the first place, I want something. By the way, to want something is not an unusual occurrence with me," and he laughed as he spoke.

"Is it money?—because I have none."

The girl spoke sharply, and a slight touch of anger was plainly perceptible in her voice.

"Your guess does credit to your understanding. As a general thing, I am sorry to say that I am usually in want of money; but this time it is something else. How

would you like to be a countess?" he asked, suddenly.

The girl looked at the speaker in wonder.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM BAXTER STREET.

ANGUS MONTGOMERY arrived in New York some four hours after O'Connell and his companions. He had received a telegram regarding the flight of the banker, and had hastened to New York at once.

On arriving in the city, he proceeded instantly to the Central Police Station, anxious to discover if any news had been received of the whereabouts of the absconding Catlin.

The detectives could not furnish him with any information.

All avenues leading from the city had been carefully watched, but, as yet, without avail.

"Bless you! he's probably on board of an ocean steamer 'fore this time," said the detective in charge of the office, "or else he's made tracks west for California. You see, he had a good twelve or eighteen hours' start, and was probably safe out of the city long before the case was put into our hands."

"Then there isn't much hope of capturing him?" Montgomery said.

"No, not much chance to put salt on the tail of such an old bird as he is. He's probably been preparing for this little trip for some time," was the detective's answer.

"If any news does come, I wish you would notify me; here's my address," Angus said.

"Certainly," the detective replied, as he took the card whereon Montgomery had penciled his street and number.

Then the young man left the office, about as wise as when he entered it.

On the sidewalk outside he met another of the detectives, who was well known to him.

"Hello! why, Mr. Montgomery, what are you doing here? nothing wrong, I hope," said the detective.

"No, nothing very particular, Mr. Kelso," Montgomery replied. "I came down to inquire if any news of this absconding banker, Catlin, has been received."

"Oh, are you concerned in that affair?" "Well, yes; about twenty thousand dollars' worth. I only banked the money with him a week or so ago. I sold out some stock and was looking around for another investment," Montgomery remarked, with a dry smile.

"Twenty thousand!" exclaimed the jolly officer, with a prolonged whistle; "well, I should say that you were a little concerned in the affair. Any news of him, inside?"

"None at all. The officer in charge says it is probable that he is safe out of New York by this time."

"I hardly think so," said the officer, slowly. "I think it is more probable that he is concealed in the city somewhere, waiting for this row to blow over, and then he'll 'light out,' as they say West."

"Do you really think so?" "Yes, I do," said the officer, decidedly.

"Then there is still a chance that he may fall into the hands of the detectives?" Montgomery asked, eagerly.

"Of course."

"Then I won't utterly despair."

"No, while there's life, there's hope, you know."

Montgomery bid the detective "good-night," and walked slowly up the street.

He did not notice that a man, who had stood in the shadow of the houses while he was conversing with the officer, and was so near that he could overhear every word of the conversation, was following his footsteps.

As Montgomery turned the corner of Bleeker street, the man hastened his steps and overtook him.

"Mr. Montgomery!" he said, in a hoarse voice, and with a cautious accent.

"Eh?" and Montgomery turned sharply around and faced the man who had followed him.

He saw a roughly-clad little fellow, with a hang-dog look.

"I guess your pardner for a speakin' to you. I thinks that maybe that wot I've got for to say, you'd like for to hear," said the fellow, in a servile way.

Montgomery felt a shudder of disgust creep over him as he looked into the evil eyes of the fellow who had addressed him.

"Well, sir, what is it?" Angus asked.

"If I don't make no mistake you wants to know where a certain cove, whose name ain't Jones, and whose name is Mr. Edward Catlin, is to be found?" said the fellow, with a cunning leer.

"Do you know where this man is?" asked Montgomery, quickly.

"Well, I don't tell all I knows for nothin'," said the man, with a grin.

With difficulty, Montgomery repressed the loathing that the man caused him. He thought, possibly, that he could gain some information from the fellow.

"If you do know any thing regarding the whereabouts of this man, by making it known to one of the officers in the station yonder, they will, beyond a doubt, pay you well for it."

"Yes, I knows wot *their* pay is—more kinks than a half-pence," said the man, with an injured air. "If I was for to go and tell 'em wot I knows, then they'd jist collar this cove, pocket the reward and leave me to whistle for my trouble, bless 'em!" The fellow didn't exactly say "bless 'em," but a due regard for our readers compels us to suppress his real exclamation.

"Well, to what use do you intend to put the information that you have?" asked Montgomery.

"I'll tell 'er in the wag of a sheep's tail," said the man, with a grin. "You see I kin put my two fingers right onto this man inside of half an hour."

"You can?" asked Montgomery.

"Cert," said the fellow, tersely; "in course, I kin! I know where he's a-hidin', a-waitin' for a chance to 'hook it. You kin b'leve wot I say, 'cos my pals allers calls me honest Tom, 'the Mouse'."

"The Mouse?" said Montgomery, astonished at the nick-name.

"In course; 'cos I'm so quiet, and sly, and so harmless, you know. Now jist by accident I see'd this Mr. Catlin a-hidin' in a certain place—which at present I'll keep unbeknown—'an' I says to myself, says I, 'Tom, here's a chance for to turn an honest penny, 'cos I wouldn't do nothink that wasn't strictly co-rect for anythink. I says to myself, says I, jist you find one of those swells up-town who has a wital interest in this here absconding cove, tell what you know, 'an' may be, if he's a gent—like yourself maybe—beggin' your honor's pardner for

makin' so free with you—why he'll come down handsome for the 'tip.'"

"Tip?" "Yes, the news, you know; that's wot we say across the water when we know that one horse is bound for to win an' other for to lose."

Montgomery thought for a moment.

"You can take me to this man, Catlin?" "You kin take your 'davy on it," replied "The Mouse."

"Can I take an officer with me?" "Wot's the use of that now, I axes you?" said the fellow, in an aggrieved way. "It ain't the cheese, you know, for to bring the hawks down onto a feller wot's in difficulties. But now this is the way I puts it—beggin' your honor's pardner, for being so familiar to give advice to a nob, like your honor is. But this 'other cove he's cut his stick with a tidy pile of your honor's money. Now I, like a good 'un—as my pals say I is—I brings this nob—meanin' you—to 't'other wot's keepin' shady. Why then, in course, you kin settle the rumpus an' no one the wiser; and you kin give 'The Mouse' somethink handsome for his honesty, you know."

"Let me put my hands on him once and I'll make him refund my money or strangle him!" said Montgomery, fiercely.

"In course you will!" cried "The Mouse," softly, and in tone of intense admiration.

"I knew it; the minut I set eyes on yer, I said to myself, says I, 'ere's the nob wot kin put his hands up along with Jem Mace or any of them coves; blessed if I didn't!' and 'The Mouse' chuckled softly to himself.

"What do you ask for this service?" "I don't ax nothink; I ain't the cove to say to a nob, like yourself, wot'll you give me. No! I knows better nor that. I leaves it to yer gen'el feelin's, for I knows well 'nough that a reg'lar out an' outer—like your honor—is a-goin' to do the tidy think with the cove wot helps him, you know. Now let these de-tectives—bless their eyes!—into the job, why the cove's all dough and we shan't get a smell. They'll gobble up all the swag. Now I'll take your honor down to where this cove is a-hidin', 'an' you kin settle the think between yourselves, jist like a couple of nob's ought for to do."

"Very well, I'll go with you," said Montgomery, decidedly. He had little fear of danger. In the full possession of health, and blessed with a strength that few men are gifted with, he was reckless of personal peril. Besides he had faith that the fellow had spoken the truth and could conduct him to the retreat of the man who had fled with his money. And once face to face with the banker, he had little doubt about being able to compel him to disgorge some of his ill-gotten gains.

"You see, your honor, I've a-been a-waitin' around the station for to see some nob as had an interest in this cove wot is a-keepin' shady, 'an' when I heard you a-talkin' with the de-tective, I said to myself, says I, 'that's my nob.'"

"Go on and I'll follow. Is it far?" "Oh, no; in Baxter street, jist 't'other side of Leonard," said the fellow.

"We'd better go down Broadway, then, through Leonard," Montgomery said.

"Bless my eyes! if you ain't hit it ag'in!" cried "The Mouse," in great admiration.

"That's the werry road."

Then Montgomery followed the skulking fellow, who had called himself, "Honest Tom, the Mouse."

The two proceeded down Broadway. As they passed the Metropolitan they attracted the attention of a small-sized, roughly-dressed man, who stood by the entrance to Nick's Garden, and gazed at them with a quill toothpick.

"Well, I never!" cried the toothpick man. "If it don't jist rain 'birds' to-day; one this afternoon and now another to-night! I ought to have an umbrella or I'll get drowned with 'em. I'll take a look arter you, my beauty, as the whale said to Jonah when he swallowed him."

Then the toothpick man followed, quietly, in the footsteps of "The Mouse" and Montgomery.

"The Mouse" led the way to a little wooden house in Baxter street, some ten doors from the corner of Leonard.

He opened the door and entered. Montgomery followed.

The guide led the way through a dark entry-way and opened the door of a dingy-looking room, apparently without windows and lit up by a single candle burning upon a small table at one side of the room.

"Sit down, your honor," said "The Mouse," bringing a dirty wooden chair and placing it in the center of the apartment.

"You see, I've got to see my pardner 'an' tell him that the job is put up, quite co-rect. I'll be back in a minute."

And with that the man left the room.

Montgomery glanced around him. The aspect was evil enough, but he had no thought of fear.

In a few moments "The Mouse" returned. "It's all right, your honor; the job is put up," said "The Mouse," with a grin.

"Is he coming?" "Yes, Patsy!"

Suddenly the floor under Montgomery gave way. He was entrapped. He felt himself falling, he knew not where.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 49.)

The Phantom Princess:

Ned Hazel, the Boy Trapper.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS,
Nephew of the Celebrated Old Grizzly Adams, the
Bear-tamer of the Rocky Mountains.

CHAPTER XVI.

A WISE BRUTE.

HUGH BANDMAN was reclining upon the pile of buffalo-skins in the Death Lodge, his thoughts sad, depressed and solemn.

He knew that Myra, his beloved, his wife, had gone in quest of Nick Whiffles a couple of days before. He scarcely dared to hope, and yet life for many years had not been so precious to him as it was now. The long-lost wife, she toward whom his heart had yearned during the dark years that had dragged over his head, and who had never given him one loving thought, had lived to see the scales fall from her eyes, and turned to him now, with an affection deeper and more sanctified than that with which she viewed him during those few days, when she was his happy bride.

Yes; life was all sunshine and beauty, and he longed for it, with all the ardor and depth of his soul.

But he could see little cause for hope. He was bound and unable to help himself in the least. The Indians were vigilant and

watchful, prepared to frustrate the first attempt to escape. He was condemned to death, and so far as he was concerned, he could not see how any human hand could save him.

"Well, let it come," he mused, with a sigh; "it is hard to be resigned, but I can die happy, if I can once more fold my darling wife and little daughter in my arms."

It was night, and the same flaring oil light burned near at hand, so that he could view the whole interior. Water and food had been abundantly furnished him, so that he was suffering nothing physically.

More than once, his eye had wandered over the sapling rafters, covered with bark and skins, wondering whether, if free, there was any ready means of reaching the outside; but it was easy to see that they were powerfully constructed, and if he were given the use of his arms, and a sharp knife, it would be the work of several hours to force his way out, and then he would be likely to fall into the hands of his captors, the moment he reached the outside.

But he had no means of loosing the bonds upon him—so that, if left alone, he knew he was sure to die.

"She has been gone two days, and she said she would be back to-night—for to-night decides my fate. 'Sh! was that a footstep?"

He raised his head and listened, but nothing reached his ears, except the mournful sighing of the night-wind through the forest outside.

The hour was late, and most of the Indians were asleep. Those who were awake, were silent and vigilant. Living such an Ishmaelite life as these Blackfeet led, they knew there was no moment when they were safe from attack by foes.

The dead of night was the favorite time of their own race for such forays, and at such times, therefore, a goodly number were on guard.

Bandman had slept very little for the past two days, and a heavy drowsiness began settling over him; and so, stretched out upon his bed of buffalo-ropes, he dropped off into a feverish, unrefreshing sleep.

Now and then he awoke with a start, certain that he heard some one in the lodge, but after listening a moment, he became convinced that it was only fancy, and sunk off into slumber again.

But near midnight, he was awakened by a genuine visitor. Something cold rubbed his face, and starting up, he recognized a large, ill-favored dog standing over him, whining and rubbing his nose against his cheek.

"Get out!" gasped the startled prisoner, with a shudder of terror, supposing that one of the numerous Indian dogs had been allowed to come in.

But the creature refused to retire, and Bandman, nervous and feverish, was about to shout for some one to remove him, when he suddenly recollected that he belonged to Nick Whiffles!

At the same moment, he observed a piece of bark tied about his neck, and suspecting at once what it meant, he succeeded in loosening it with his hands, bound and cramped though his arms were.

The bark was thin and white, having been taken fresh from a sapling, and on the tender inner coating had been scratched some words, that now were well defined, owing to the darkening of the sap, where the letters had been traced. Bandman managed to read with little difficulty the following:

"This dog has been sent you by Nick Whiffles, who is near at hand to befriend you. The dog will gnaw your bonds asunder, and then pass out the lodge; the next moment you are to do the same, and make a rush for the woods, where you will be met by Nick, who will do all he can to help you."

Hugh Bandman made certain that he had read and that he had understood every word upon the strip of bark; then he quietly tore it in pieces, and cast it from him.

This done, he looked about for the hero, Calamity, and saw the tip of his tail as he whisked out of the door.

"Has he deserted me?" asked the captive, with a sinking of the heart, but he had hardly uttered the words, when he comprehended the sagacity of the brute.

One of the Indians had seen that among the several dogs, playing about the lodge, was one that had entered. Suspecting nothing, however, he had walked to the door of the cabin, and looked in, out of curiosity, merely to see what was going on.

As he did so, the dog shot by him into the open air again, and he saw the white man look up alarmedly at him, and then drop his gaze as in sad reverie.

The Blackfoot stood a few minutes at the door, scrutinizing the interior of the Death Lodge. The light was burning brightly, and by it, he saw no signs of anything unusual. The top and sides were undisturbed, and from where he stood, he could see that the bonds of the prisoner were firm and secure as ever.

Every thing being satisfactory, he turned and moved away.

It struck this same sentinel, that the dogs were unusually frisky that night, and that they were very fond of frolicking in the neighborhood of the Death Lodge. He stood and watched them for a few minutes, and then turned away and joined his companions who were loitering near.

Scarcely was his back turned, when in went Calamity again. The sagacious brute went straight up to where the captive was lying, and without any preliminaries, applied his sharp teeth to the thongs that bound his elbows, and in a twinkling they were free.

Then the thongs at the wrist followed suit. He was still fastened at the knees and ankles, and Calamity was about to attack these, when he seemed to change his mind, and out of the door he went again.

Bandman understood the meaning of this movement, and he took the hint at once.

Lying on his side, he took pains to keep his arms behind him in the same position, as before they were unfastened, and the better to deceive his foe, he kept his head lowered, and began nodding, as though he were dropping off to sleep.

He heard the cautious footstep of the Indian, and he knew that he was standing at the door, and looking at him, but still the trapper did not raise his head.

In the utter silence which thus prevailed, Bandman was fearful that the savage would hear the throbbing of his heart, and would penetrate his calm exterior and see the tumult that agitated him.

Could it be that his suspicions were aroused? Had he been watching and seen the dog at work? Had the brute been outwitted by the greater brute of a man?

Such and similar were the questions that agitated the captive during these dreadful moments, when he knew that the burning eyes of the Indian were fixed upon him,

not daring to guess what his next movement would be.

If the red-skin had actually detected the ruse that was being attempted, Hugh saw nothing but failure before him. True, his arms were free, and had he possessed a weapon, he would have made a fight upon being approached by the dusky scoundrel; but he did not possess a knife even, and could make no resistance at all.

But he waited and prayed that his enemy would move away and leave him alone, for he felt that he could not stand this searching scrutiny much longer.

The prayer was granted. His strained ears caught the soft rustle, and heard the faint sound of footsteps as the Indian turned upon his heel and moved away. Raising his head, Bandman saw that he was alone again.

It seemed to the poor fellow that so much of the night had passed, that the morning—dawn of his last day—was close at hand. In reality it was only a little past midnight; but he was becoming so distressed and agitated that he felt he could not stand this suspense much longer.

"Sh! here was Calamity again. Heaven's blessings upon the noble creature, and upon his noble master, who was risking so much for a comparative stranger."

As before, the dog proceeded to business without delay. A few vigorous clamps of his jaws, and the cords parted at the ankles; those at the knees quickly followed, and then Hugh Bandman was free.

Calamity stood a moment, looking straight into the face of the man whom he had benefited; then he turned about and darted out of the door again.

The critical moment had come, and Hugh Bandman staggered toward the door, resolved to make one last grand struggle for life.

CHAPTER XVII.
RACING WITH A PHANTOM.

At this critical moment the three Blackfoot sentinels were standing together, just

He stood for a moment in deep thought, and then he roused up ready to act.

Well aware of the marvelous skill of the princess in the use of her oar, he concluded that it would be called in requisition upon the present occasion. Somewhere, therefore, at no great distance, up the river, she was now, or soon would be, with her charge.

Striding from the lodge, Woo-wol-na made his way to the shore, where several canoes were always lying. He was accompanied by a half-dozen of his trustiest and tried warriors, and he still had strong hopes of success.

It was barely possible that the fugitives had gone down the stream; but as this course would have carried them further away from what must have been their destination, he did not believe that contingency probable enough to warrant any effort in that direction.

"Up-stream," said he, as he seated himself in the bow, "and row as best you can." There were no "slouches" in the canoe, and the boat fairly skimmed over the surface of the river.

The moon was as clear and powerful as upon the preceding night, and the Indian boat shot out directly in the center, as though disdaining the current, which, in reality, was so slight as to cause scarcely any perceptible impediment.

For a half-mile the progress was continued in this manner, and then Woo-wol-na gave the word for the boat to turn nearer shore, where the stream flowed more slowly.

His reason for doing this was, in the windings of the river, there were many places where there was quite deep shadow, of which he wished to avail himself. If the whites were upon the river, and should discern their pursuers, and should find there was danger of their being overtaken, they could easily run in to shore, and so long as the darkness lasted, could keep out of the way of all pursuers.

His wish, therefore, was to steal upon them, if possible, so as to intercept and prevent any such flank movement.

The Indians used their paddles with amazing strength and skill; nothing but the ripple of the water from the prow, and the soft wash from their oars could be heard, as they glided along shore with such swiftness.

On, on they pressed, their muscles seeming never to tire. Several miles were passed and still nothing was seen or heard of the fugitives. Woo-wol-na leaned forward over the prow, his eagle eye piercing the gloom ahead, on the look-out for the first indication of the parties for whom he was searching.

At it would have gone ill with the Phantom Princess had she fallen into his power at this time.

His whole soul was aroused, and he was in that mood when helpless womanhood or youthful innocence would have appealed to his mercy in vain.

Fully a half-dozen miles were passed, and he still relaxed not his vigilance in the least.

"Woon!"

He uttered the exclamation with such forceful suddenness that all the warriors stopped rowing on the instant. He explained by pointing ahead to where, near the center of the stream, and so far away as to be only dimly visible, the white canoe of the Phantom Princess was to be seen.

The next instant, the paddles were dipped deep, and the Indian canoe shot forward with a speed that seemed about to tear her in two. Great as was the skill of the woman, the chief was confident that his warriors could overtake her.

When Myra Bandman vanished so suddenly from the sight of the Hudson Bay trappers, who were pursuing her, it was only by one of her strokes no more skillful than the hundreds by which she kept beyond their reach all the time.

She was very close to the shore at the time, and growing weary of the race, she made a dexterous flit of her paddles that sent the canoe under the overhanging undergrowth like a flash, where it was concealed from any who might be passing within a few feet.

But Woo-wol-na was familiar with her stratagems, and there was no danger of his being deceived by any of them. His purpose was to keep them in view, until they had approached near enough to send several rifle-shots after them, by which he hoped at least to disable them, as to render further flight useless.

They had gone some distance before the fugitives gave evidence of discovering their danger; then the race began in earnest. As my readers are aware, the Phantom Princess carried her husband, daughter, Nick Whiffles and the dog, so that she was under such disadvantage that she could not call into play all her astonishing skill, and the race had not continued five minutes when it was evident that the Blackfeet were gaining quite rapidly.

Woo-wol-na was the first to see this, and he cheered his men to renewed exertions. They strained every muscle and gained faster and faster.

Just what the wary chief feared now took place. Instead of keeping in the middle of the river, where there were in plain view, the fugitives began making for the shore. With a howl of rage, the savage raised his rifle and fired. To his amazement it was answered from the canoe ahead, and the bullet sang rather uncomfortably close to his own head.

But the exertions of his men were not relaxed in the least. If possible, they toiled the harder, and turned aside as if to head off the approach of the whites to land.

The distance was too great to accomplish any thing by this maneuver, and to the chagrin of the Blackfeet, while they were watching the swan-like flight of the canoe, it flew under the shrubbery along shore and was lost to view.

But Woo-wol-na and his warriors had marked the point where it had disappeared, and they kept on straight toward it, shooting in under the bushes, only a few moments behind.

But there was no boat visible. It had vanished as suddenly as when pursued by the trappers.

The instant she had landed, the light boat had been caught up in the grasp of her friends, who would probably carry it a half-mile and then launch it again.

Very well; if she could do that, so could he. Not hoping to overtake her in the woods, or to tell at what precise point she would embark again, the Blackfeet made a rapid but wide detour through the forest, and coming back to the river at a point fully a mile above.

Here it was placed in the water again, and they paused and listened.

Nothing of the other boat was to be heard. "They will soon pass here!" said the chief; "we will wait for them."

Like a panther crouching under the bank and waiting for its victim, the five Indians lay in wait. Daylight broke and found them still there, but they waited, for Woo-wol-na knew that he was right, and his prey must sooner or later pass in front of him, where escape would be impossible.

Yes; he was right.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE escape of Hugh Bandman from the Death Lodge of the Blackfeet was in accordance with the scheme of Nick Whiffles, and, as the reader has learned, succeeded perfectly.

I have shown how well the pup Calamity performed his part, and how the prisoner followed him out at the very moment that he was directed to do so. Without looking to the right or left, he headed straight for the wood, where he was met by Nick, who whispered:

"Follow me, and don't make no noise." The old trapper then headed toward the river, which was reached before the alarm of the Indians.

"I don't know how long they'll watch that burnin' punk," said he, as they paused on the edge of the river; "but it ain't likely they'll stay there long, and then there's a chance for a powerful diffikilty. Here we are!"

As the last exclamation was uttered, they came upon the white canoe, in which Myra and her daughter were seated. In that moment, terrible from its anxiety, husband and wife embraced, and mingled their tears.

But it was only for an instant, and while Myra was wondering what it all meant, they took their seats in the canoe and shoved out from shore, Myra, as a matter of course, handling the paddle.

The weight in the boat was more than it was intended to carry, and it sunk alarmingly low in the water; but it was too late to rectify any error, and the devoted wife now called all her energies into play.

They had not gone far, when Nick saw that another serious oversight had been committed. The oar which the lady held in her hand was the only one in the boat. They ought to have had two more, at least, for him and Hugh, by which the speed of the canoe could have been doubled without difficulty. As it was, she insisted upon using it herself, so that they could do nothing but remain passive spectators.

"Do you think we shall be pursued?" asked Bandman, turning toward Nick, who was caressing Calamity, and praising him for the part he had performed.

"I don't think so—I know so," was the reply.

"It must be near morning, isn't it?" "There be several good hours yet, in which we must do all we kin; do you know I feel mighty mean, to set here and see that woman use that paddle?"

"So do I, but how can we help it? But she will get tired of this after a while, and then she'll have to give us a chance—Hill-lo! what's that?"

"It's the alarm at the village; they've found out you're off, and now the fun will begin."

Precisely where the fun came in was more than the rest of the party could see. With the first sound of the commotion, the Phantom Princess increased the speed of the canoe to the highest point.

This, as has already been said, was far less than her ordinary speed, on account of the unusual weight in the canoe.

There was little said, for every member of the company was deeply impressed with the seriousness of the situation, and they felt that it was a time for deeds and not for talk.

When the lady had carried the canoe several miles, her husband insisted so strongly upon taking the paddle in hand that she consented, and he sent it forward with a speed fully equal to hers.

While this was going on, the watchful Nick was on the look-out for pursuers. He knew that while the Blackfoot warriors were scouring the woods in every direction, Woo-wol-na was too sharp to forget the river. He was sure to take that means of pursuit, and it behooved him to see that his friends were not stolen upon and recaptured.

Nick was feeling quite hopeful, when his heart gave one extra throb as he discerned a dark object far down the river which resembled a canoe. He scrutinized it several moments, until there could no longer be any doubt, when he announced his discovery.

"The varmints are coming, sure."

"Let me take the paddle, then," said Myra, with some alarm, as she reached out her hand for it.

"No, wife," he replied, without checking his labor in the least; "you have wonderful skill, but your arm is not as strong as mine, and I can carry this boat forward with as much speed as you."

"Oh, Heaven, favor us!" she prayed, as she covered up her face, as if to shut out the sight of those who, after being so many years her friends, she now regarded as her bitterest enemies.

Nick Whiffles was watching the coming canoe as a cat watches a mouse. It did not take him long to see that the Indians were coming up "hand-over-hand," consequently there was no use in attempting to compete with them, when the result of the race was inevitable.

Certain of this, he said as much, and at his suggestion the canoe was heaved toward shore. Seeing this, as has already been shown, the Blackfeet sent a spiteful shot after them.

"By gracious! that looks like business!" exclaimed Nick, as he sighted his gun in return. "I guess Woo-wol-na is in that boat, and he doesn't feel much like palaverin' over this matter. I wouldn't give much for the hair of any of us if they catch us."

It was Nick who fired the return shot that came so startlingly near the Indians. He had no expectation and no wish to strike the pursuers, but it struck him that it might serve to show them that, if it should come to be a fight, there would be some of it done by both parties.

Reaching the shore, all sprung out at once, and Nick and Hugh caught up the boat by concert, and plunged into the woods with it.

Thus the suspicions of Woo-wol-na proved correct, for the fugitives were attempting the very stratagem of which I have spoken.

"We'll come back to the river about a half-mile up," said Nick, thus unconsciously running into the very trap that had been set for them.

This was done, they reaching the river at just about that distance from the starting-point. Here the boat was launched, and they all took their seats in it again.

They remained concealed, not wishing to put out until they could gather some idea of the locale of their enemies. They listened and watched, but saw and heard nothing. Calamity made a short reconnaissance through the surrounding woods, but he gave no indications of learning any thing.

"It's beginning to get light in the east," said Bandman, who was quite impatient at the delay; "it seems to me we are losing very precious time."

"Go ahead," replied Nick, "but keep close to the shore, and be ready to dart under at any minute."

In this way they coasted along, until they had gone a good distance, and the sun was rising. Nick Whiffles had taken the paddle, and reaching a sharp point, he said:

"We'll go in here awhile and make a few observations."

As he spoke, he shot round the point, and Calamity gave a low growl.

"What is it, pup?" asked his master, in alarm.

A wail went up from Myra, as Woo-wol-na's canoe suddenly shot out, less than a dozen yards distant, and made straight for them.

Nick Whiffles saw that it was all up, and he made no attempt to escape!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 46.)

ORPHAN NELL.

The Orange-Girl:

OR, THE LOST HEIR OF THE LIVINGSTONES.

A ROMANCE OF CITY LIFE.

BY AGUE PENNE.

CHAPTER XX.

THE VENGEANCE OF ALEX GORDEN.

I SAW Peters about eight o'clock, just after breakfast. This was Thursday morning. I gave him the direction relating to Salome Livingstone's abode. I also informed him that the servant, and we explained to that somewhat astonished gentleman what had occurred the previous night.

About nine o'clock Peters departed to visit the heiress, and at eleven I started for the post-office, leaving Joe to keep Vanderwilt company.

I arrived at the post-office about half-past eleven. I walked down-town quite slowly, although I was in a fever of impatience. At the post-office, I took up a position at the upper corner and waited. Just as the City Hall clock struck twelve, I saw a dainty little figure, clad neatly in black, coming down Nassau street. I followed her, and the strange-hued hair, that the sun tinged with its yellow sheen, I advanced and met her before she crossed the street. The meeting was commonplace enough. I held out my hand and said, "How do you do?" She just pressed my offered palm and said, "Very well, thank you," then took my arm and we walked up toward Broadway. Once on Broadway, we turned down toward the Battery.

I don't exactly know how I said it, but, as we walked along, I managed in a very few words to tell Nell how much I loved her, and she, in as few words in reply, told me that the love was returned by her; but, I knew that before she had said a word, for she had told me so with her eyes.

"Ah! Nell," I said, "we shall be so happy."

"I hope so," she replied, simply. "I know so," I said, "for I love you and you love me. I did not know how much I loved you until fate separated me from you, but, after I was compelled to go away from you, I suddenly discovered that you were necessary to my existence, that I should not be happy without you. By the way, Nell, I have prospered in the world." Then I told her of my adventures in the gold mines, and how there I had suddenly acquired a fortune. She listened with interest to my story.

"How was it, Nell," I asked, "that you came to leave New York so suddenly?" "I will tell you all about it to-morrow. I have something, too, besides that, to tell you to-morrow; that is, I think I shall have; I'm not quite sure yet. You know you asked me once about my life, but then I had a reason for not telling you. To-morrow I think that reason will be removed, and then I can tell you all." It was evident that there was a little mystery connected with Nell's early life; but to-morrow would do for me; to-day, the present happiness was enough.

And so we walked and talked—talked those sweet nothings which are so pleasant to hear sometimes. We reached the Battery, then we retraced our steps and walked up Broadway to Union Square, and it was two o'clock before we guessed it was one.

"Oh! how late it is!" she cried, as I looked at my watch.

"Yes, time flies quickly sometimes." "That's very true," she answered, looking at me with those dark-blue eyes that were now so full of love. Oh! how I adored her! What wouldn't I have given just to have touched her lips for a moment then—those full, ripe, red lips, the rosebuds that were all mine! But, as we were standing in Union Square at two o'clock of a bright, pleasant afternoon, and the streets were full of people passing up and down, touching her lips just then was only to be thought of, not done.

"I must go home, for I have promised to go out this afternoon," she said.

"And when shall I see you again?" I asked.

"To-night; have you a pencil and card?"

"I'll give my address, so that you can call upon me," she answered.

I produced the pencil and card; she wrote her address, and then I consigned it to my pocket-book.

"Good-by," she said; "come to-night and come early. Perhaps I may have something to tell you then that may surprise you."

"Good-by," I answered; "you may expect me the first thing after supper, and then, you mysterious little puss, you can satisfy my curiosity."

She laughed, bid me good-by again, and then we parted. Could I but have foreseen the events of the next few hours, I do not think we would have parted at all; but who can guess the future?

I returned at once to the Metropolitan; there I found Peters waiting for me, terribly impatient.

"Pretty fellow you are to keep a man waiting!" he cried. "It's after two."

"Never mind, we have time enough. I could not help being detained," and probably with truth, I might have added, I would not have helped it if I could.

"Well, now to business," said Peters. "Yes, to business," I repeated. "In the first place, did you see the young lady?"

"Yes."

"Miss Salome Livingstone?"

"Exactly."

"What sort of a person is she?"

"Well, she looks quite young—don't look much over seventeen instead of being twenty-five."

"Pretty?" I asked.

"What the devil does that matter to you?" replied Peters, laughing; "you don't want to marry the heiress, do you, as a reward for getting her father's property for her?"

"Of course not!" I replied. I thought that there was but little danger of that, as long as the great passion for Nell filled my heart!

"Well, she is very pretty; she has the Livingstone family marks, as regards hair and eyes; in fact, she looks enough like Richard Livingstone, to be his full sister instead of being only a half-sister."

"How did she receive the intelligence?"

"Quite coolly, at first. It seems she made a promise to her mother, never to trouble her father, Anson Livingstone, or even to let him know that she was living. She seemed to think that she ought to extend that promise to take in the son, but, when I told her of the will that her father, Anson, had made, leaving her one-half the property, and how Richard had schemed to get that will into his possession, and had, by his agents, destroyed it, in attempting to do so, all the old Livingstone blood in her veins fired up, and she said that she would put herself fully into our hands and be guided solely by us. I tell you, she looked just like a little queen when I told her about the will business. She drew herself up, and said, 'If my half-brother Richard had treated me right, I would never have troubled him; only for just enough to treat me as an enemy, I will show him that I am his father's child as well as he.' If I hadn't been a married man, with one of the nicest women for a wife that ever lived, she would have taken me for all I was worth."

"She consents, then, to put her case in our hands?"

"Yes, of course. I didn't mention any names, because if I had spoken of you as an outsider, she naturally would have wanted to know what in thunder you were mixing yourself up in the affair for. Then, if she learned that you were after revenge for his murdering your friend, she might not want to send her half-brother to the gallows or to the stone-jug for life. By the way," asked the detective, suddenly, "you've got Livingstone pretty well cornered now. This heiress will strip him of all his money; then, if you bring the accusation of murder against him, without money he will be powerless, and you can crush him."

"Yes," I answered, and I felt that a tone of triumph was swelling in my voice; "at last I hold the winning hand."

"Trumps, every one on 'em, or I'm a Dutchman!" returned Peters.

Then we arranged our plan of attack. Peters was to go to Thirtieth street and get Salome, the heiress, and bring her to Livingstone's house, where I and Joe, as a body-guard—for desperate men sometimes do desperate things, and I had no idea of being killed at the moment of victory—would precede them.

The detective took an omnibus up-town, and Joe and I took the Broadway line of cars, which left us a block from Livingstone's house.

On arriving at Richard's stately brownstone mansion, I walked up the steps, followed by Joe, and rung the bell. When the servant opened the door we walked right in.

"Tell Mr. Livingstone Mr. Robert James, detective officer, desires to see him on particular business," I said, walking into the parlor, the door of which stood open. Joe followed close at my heels. The servant looked a little astonished at our abrupt entrance, but at once went with my message to his master.

Within three minutes, Livingstone walked into the parlor. I could see that he looked nervous and a little surprised at a visit from a detective. I rose at his entrance and took off both my hat and the light, curly wig.

"Gordon!" he cried, in astonishment, and his face blanched at the sight of me.

"The same, quite at your service," I replied, quite politely.

"What do you want with me?" he exclaimed; and then, without giving me time to answer, he continued his speech: "Do you not know that you are an escaped felon—that a word from me to the nearest policeman would send you to Sing Sing?"

"Well, why don't you speak that word?" I asked, with a slight tone of menace in my voice, as much as to say, "you had better not try it!"

"Why? Because, Alex Gordon, I have done you mischief enough already. Don't force me in my own self-defense to strike you again. If it is to be your life or mine, I am such a vile coward I can not sacrifice my own life, and must fight you. But, I'll make you a fair offer. I'll give you a thousand dollars a year to leave the States and live in some foreign country. Alex, we were friends once; I am not a good man, in any sense of the word, but I think sometimes of that old friendship, and I feel sorry that hatred ever came between us. You know now, Alex, that I have the best of the struggle, and that I make you a fair offer."

I saw that he was thoroughly in earnest; here was one good trait in this man's nature.

"You are wrong," I replied; "you have not the best of the struggle. I have been pardoned. Your agent, Clark, was foiled in his attempt to secure your father's will last night, and destroyed the will, sooner than let it fall into my hands."

"It was you, then, that baffled me there?" he cried.

"Yes, it was I! That will is destroyed. If I find the heir Salome, the child of Salome Percy, who was your father's just and only wife—for his second marriage was void, being contracted while the first wife lived—and prove her claim, it will strip you and your sister Olive of every dollar that you have, for you are illegitimate. I have found the heiress, Salome; she is in New York, and will be here within half an hour. I have the proofs of the marriage of her mother and of her birth."

It was thunder all around. Livingstone sat down in a chair that stood near him, his face deadly pale, his brow streaming perspiration in large drops. It was a moment of triumph for me. At last I had won the difficult game. I held the trumps—the stakes, he himself had said it: my life against his; and I had won!

The door-bell sounded. I hastened to open the door, for, as I expected, it was Peters and the heiress, Salome. I caught only a glimpse of her as she passed in the hall, and followed Peters into the parlor—he preceding me in obedience to a motion of my hand. She was a little body, with a light, springy step that put me strangely in mind of some one, but, for the moment, I could not recall the some one, but guessed it was her half-sister, Olive. I followed them into the parlor.

"This is Mr. Peters," I said, addressing Livingstone. He had risen to his feet, and the look of anguish on his pale, handsome face was painful to behold, but MacCarthy's spirit was by my side; his voice said, "This is my murderer. Vengeance!" It whispered in my ear and rung through my brain. Vengeance was in my grasp and I would have it in full.

"This is Miss Salome Livingstone," said Peters, introducing the slight veiled figure.

"Brother," said a low, sweet voice. I could hardly believe my ears.

"Yes, I am your brother, Salome," said Richard, in a low, broken tone, "although I have not acted toward you like a brother. Forgive me, if you can; I will restore all. I can make you some recompense—but, there is one other here, whose debt can only be satisfied by the forfeit of my life. I am not fit to die; no man is who bears with him a record of crime—crime that perhaps might have been atoned for."

"Perhaps I can plead for you," said the low, sweet voice—a voice that thrilled my heart like strains of joy. Oh! it was music to my ears!

"Plead to him, then," said Richard, indicating me. He alike is my accuser and my judge. Then he again sunk back in the chair.

"You will have mercy, Mr. Gordon?" said Salome Livingstone, addressing me, at the same moment raising up the heavy black veil that had concealed her features, and revealing to my gaze the steel-blue eyes and yellow hair of the darling of my heart, Nell, the Orange Girl!

Of course I had suspected this from the moment she had spoken, as probably the reader had. Then flashed upon me the truth. The story that Nell had told me of her life, slight as it was, was still the story of the heiress Salome. My name never being mentioned in the affair, of course she had no suspicion that I knew any thing about it. This was the secret that she was to tell me on the morrow. But, it was all revealed now.

Livingstone sat before me, the criminal, waiting for his sentence. What should it be? I had sworn to MacCarthy to avenge his death; I had avenged it, for I had stripped his murderer of wealth and station. Should I go further and take the life that I had won?

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord," a low sweet voice whispered in my ear, and a little hand stole into mine with a gentle pressure.

"Richard Livingstone, I will make you the same offer that you made me a moment ago. Go to a foreign land; you shall have a certain amount of money each year. You are young; a new life is before you. In that new life strive to forget the old."

This was my vengeance—a more manly one than if I had taken the life at my disposal.

A gentle pressure of Nell's little hand rewarded me.

My story is done. In due time Nell came in possession of all her property, excepting twenty-five thousand dollars she set apart for Olive, her half-sister. Before the estate was settled, Nell and I were married; love like ours could not wait for the law's cold delay. We were married and we are as happy—well, as happy as it is possible for mortals to be in this world.

Joe hunted up his mother, bought a house for the "old woman," as he terms her, at Stamford, and lives there, amusing himself by cultivating his little estate.

The servant, Vanderwilt, returned to India and expressed his intention of living and dying there. He prefers the "Thugs" to the New York sharpers.

Richard Livingstone sailed for Brazil to seek a new fortune and lead a new life far from his native land. May that new life atone for the past.

THE END.

Dime Song Book, No. 27.

THE HEATHEN CHINEE SONGSTER.

A choice collection of the Latest Copyright Songs, MINSTREL MELODIES

And Popular Ballads of the Day.

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from beneath his couch. Then he cautiously raised the sash, and, having secured one end of the stout cord to the bed, crossed the sill and lowered himself to the ground.

"Now for a bride!" he muttered, and he hurried off in the darkness, leaving the rope dangling from the window.

He threaded many dark thoroughfares ere he paused before the door of an elegant mansion—the home of Guy St. Clair. A servant responded to his raps, and he was admitted into the dwelling.

He found the St. Clairs seated in the magnificently appointed parlor, and, in a few words, he acquainted them with his difficulty with Sir Hugh.

"We will baffle him!" cried Guy St. Clair, who detested Sir Hugh as the latter hated him. "Ellen, are you prepared to become a bride to-night?"

"Yes, yes, dear father," cried the beautiful girl, as she blushing slipped to her lover's side.

A servant summoned the surplined man of God to his master's mansion, and the loving twain were made one.

With the appearance of the golden orb of light the following morning, Rodney left the St. Clair mansion, and, accompanied by his lovely bride, sought his uncle's residence.

The Governor had not yet risen; but the wedded couple were admitted to the parlor, there to await his excellency's appearance. At last his step was heard in the corridor, and the lovers rose to their feet.

Presently the door opened very slowly, and the Governor, clad in his audience suit, crossed the threshold. A groan welled from his throat as his eyes fell upon the occupants of the room, and, with a sigh, he tottered forward and sunk into the elaborate arm-chair.

Until that moment he believed his nephew his prisoner, guarded by the malicious Berkeley.

In silence the lovers watched the outwitted Governor until, to all outward appearances, he regained his composure. Then Rodney drew a piece of paper from an inner pocket, thrust it into his relative's hand, and rejoined his bride.

Sir Hugh sprung to his feet, smoothed the creases of the paper, and with demoniac gaze, and hand pressed to his wildly throbbing temple, read the certificate of his nephew's marriage.

"Curse him!" he hissed, in a monotone, and then suddenly confronted the lovers. "Rodney Bradley, I never thought thus of you. You have sullied the honored name you bear by the matrimonial alliance which you have made. Boy, within a short period I shall return to England, and by the heavens above! I swear that Bradley Park shall never become your residence."

A smile flitted across Rodney's face as he spoke.

Already the estate has passed from my hands. Unknown to you, Sir Hugh, my agents have profitably disposed of it, and the last vessel from the old land brought me the purchase money. So you perceive that I have outwitted you all around. I shall never return to England. In America I hope to pass the remainder of my life."

Maddened beyond description at finding himself completely outwitted, Sir Hugh paced the floor excitedly, muttering incoherently in a tone which resembled the hoarse growls of the tiger. At length he dropped into the chair, and waved his hand toward the door.

"Go!" he cried, glaring fiercely at his nephew. "Never cross my path again."

The twain were on the point of departing when he regained his feet.

"I am old and very near the goal of all mortals," he said. "We will never meet again this side of that goal—the tomb. Therefore, may Providence smile upon your union, and make me a better old man. Now go."

The command, spoken with great emotion, was obeyed, and Sir Hugh Bradley found himself alone.

A fortnight later he returned to his native country, from whose shores he sent many blessings to the man who had outwitted him, and wedded his enemy's daughter.

Was it a Warning?

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

NELLIE ARMSTRONG sat by the fire, one bitterly cold day, her bright-hued zephyrs twining like glowing vines around her listless hands; her eyes—bright, joyous eyes they were generally—were gazing deep into the heart of the flames, as if seeking to read some riddle that was still unexplained.

For a half-hour she sat there, still thoughtful; then, with a sigh, almost of pain, resumed her work on a pair of vividly beautiful slippers she was making for Harry Rivers, to whom she was to be married the next year.

Mrs. Armstrong, sewing beside the window, glanced up, when that wearily-uttered sigh came to her ears.

"You are not ill, my dear? or fatigued after your walk?" Nellie smiled at the watchful tenderness.

"Oh, no, not at all. Perhaps you'd say I was 'mooning,' if I told you what troubled me; and, mother, it does worry me."

The smile faded from her lips and eyes, and Mrs. Armstrong noted the wan, weary look return to her face that she had noticed for several days; not the pallor of sickness, pain or fatigue, but an indefinite something that was peculiarly peculiar.

"If it arises from any cause I can remedy, rest assured I shall not lose a moment in doing so. Now, tell me, Nellie."

She laid aside her sewing, and gently drew her daughter's work from her hands; and then she noticed how hot and feverish they were.

"If you are not bodily sick, my dear child, there is some great distress praying on your mind. Am I not right?"

"Yes, you are; and I'll tell you, even at the risk of being lovingly laughed at. Mother, I am worried about Harry! For a week I have dreamed every night about him, and now, so strong has some unseen power come over me, that even waking, the same vision comes to me. It is dreadful, dreadful, mother, to be so pursued by such thoughts."

Her eyes held glistening tears as her mother pressed her hand in silent sympathy. "The dream, or vision, or presentiment, whatever it may be, is always precisely the same: I always see Harry among rocks, where a stream of water flows noisily; and there are two men, whose faces are masked, watching behind a jutting crag for him to come. Mother! mother! this very moment the scene is before me, in mid-air! Surely

Harry's life is in danger, else why this agony to me?"

Pale and trembling Nellie sat, while great drops of perspiration gathered on her face; then she suddenly burst into a gust of tears.

"You may not believe it, for I know it seems strange! But, mother, when Harry comes from the city to-night he must know this, and be on his guard. I think I will lie down for an hour before he comes; my head aches so dreadfully."

Mrs. Armstrong threw the sofa Afghan over her, and wheeled her nearer the fire, that was shining cheerily in the fast-gathering gloom; then, when Nellie had fallen into a light slumber, she went out to the dining-room, thinking seriously of what her daughter had said, and determined to see their physician that evening.

Just then Mr. Armstrong came in; to him she told the curious story; and he started for Doctor Grace, who could perhaps relieve their daughter from the distress she experienced.

It had probably been half an hour since Mr. Armstrong went out when he returned with Doctor Grace—a cheery, genial old gentleman, who loved Nellie as well almost as his own daughter.

The three went quietly into the gloom of the back parlor, after Mrs. Armstrong had repeated the story that her husband told the doctor; and with the pale cold moonlight laying like a silver blanket over Nellie, they watched her, as, in her slumber, she moaned unintelligibly and twisted her hands.

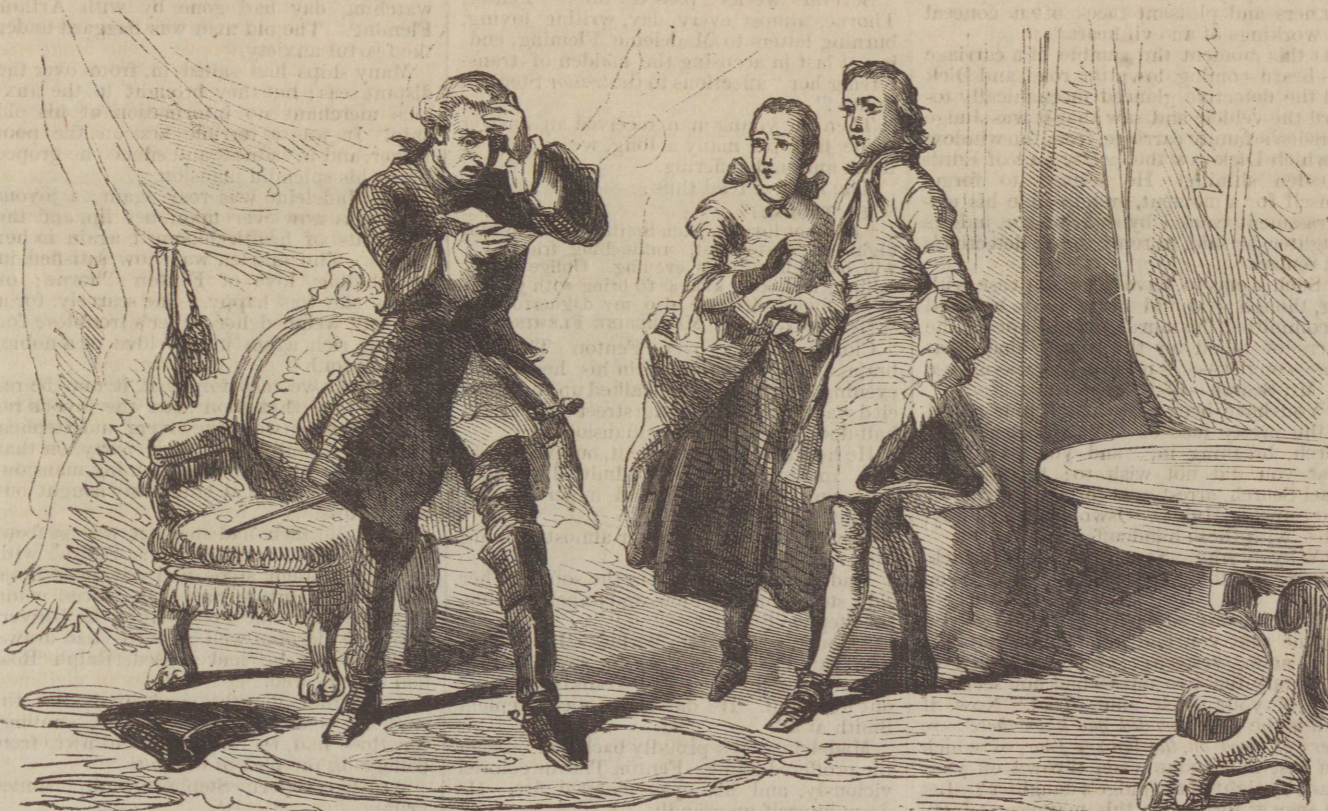
"I had better awaken her," the mother had said, but Doctor Grace caught her arm almost fiercely.

"By no means! by no means! there is more in this than any of us imagine. It is a most interesting incident, so far, and I must beg you will let it progress. No harm possibly can arise, I assure you."

Then after his whisper was over with, they stood still again; almost stupefied with amazement.

Nellie had arisen from the sofa, and sat thoughtfully meditating apparently; her eyes wide opened, yet wearing the peculiar glassy stare of the somnambulist.

She deliberately arose, went to the closet, and carefully put on her blanket shawl, furs, gloves and hat; then started at a moderate walk across the rooms to the parlor door; this she unfastened, went through the hall, unlocked the front door, and started down the street. Dr. Grace and Mr. Armstrong following at a safe distance, while the mother, half-alarmed, threw a shawl about her and watched them out of sight.



OUTWITTED.

It was nearly eight o'clock, and few persons were abroad in the village; so, unobserved, Nellie glided on, past the houses that lined the one street, down by the mill, over the little bridge, and out into the open country; a place her father felt sure was before unknown to her.

There were rocks and a narrow, deep ribbon of water that flowed with remarkable velocity and noise, and the frozen mud at its sides.

There Nellie stopped; cautiously, carefully creeping among the boulders, and Dr. Grace and Mr. Armstrong excitedly awaited further movements.

It was not long they had to wait; for, directly, men's voices, gradually approaching, yet tuned to a low, cautious key, were heard.

"You take this side, and I'll take that; then, when he comes past, we'll spring at once; a couple of blows and the work is done. Wasn't it a cute trick of Jim's to make him lose the train up, and then suggest a horse and carriage? Jim's a bright one, you bet; and when this fellow's out of the way, there's nothing between Jim and five thousand the old grandmother left. Hark!"

Almost frozen with horror, the doctor and Mr. Armstrong had listened; and then, the crunching, rasping sound of rapidly-approaching carriage-wheels over the rough, stony road, fell distinctly on their ears.

The doctor looked toward Nellie, and jerked Mr. Armstrong's sleeve. "See, there!"

Nellie had arisen from her feet, her eyes dilating in their glassy stare; then, as the noise became plainer and plainer, she seemed to be waking.

"I have a pistol, Armstrong; I always carry one; you take stones, and we'll do the best we can to protect this traveler, who may or may not be Mr. Rivers. Now, be all ready!"

At that instant the carriage dashed up; a simultaneous shriek from Nellie, who had suddenly awakened in extreme terror, and cries from Dr. Grace and Mr. Armstrong; the young man—to their surprise it was Harry Rivers—sprung from the carriage; a second's glance revealed the situation; and when, riding-whip in hand, and reinforced by a shower of stones from Mr. Armstrong's arms, and a series of shots from the doctor's revolver, he surprised the assassins, they turned and unceremoniously fled.

In a few words all was explained, as they rode home in the carriage, Nellie leaning on her lover's shoulder.

His second cousin had planned the dreadful deed, as the men had explained, to secure a little fortune that was in the family; but, by the remarkable presentiment that we have related, his life had been saved by the one to whom he had sworn to devote it.

In after years Nellie and Harry would talk over the event, and wonder where James Rivers, whom Harry had forgiven—wrongly perhaps—was wandering.

How Charlie Proposed.

BY JOSEPH E. RADGER, JR.

THERE had been a good deal said about it, both *pro* and *con*, and the young folks of Bellemont were on the tip-toe of expectation and excitement. It was not only a break in the dull monotony that had reigned during the hot, sultry days, but then it was to eclipse all previous affairs of a like nature, and be a period for future reference.

By "it" I mean the grand picnic, excursion, or what not, to wind up with a moonlight sail upon the river, and a grand pyrotechnical display—or "fireworks," as we called it.

It was a deeply momentous occasion to us young folks, in general, but far more so to a certain couple, with whom I intend more particularly to deal. These I will call Annie Chambers and Charles Plummer, mainly because those were not their names.

Annie was the village beauty, and out of the two score marriageable youths that our town of Bellemont boasted, at least thirty-nine of them had, at one time or another, sighed like a furnace for love of the gentle Annie. But one by one they were laughed out of their folly by the merry sprite, and of them all, Charlie was the one she tantalized most.

A bewitching brunette, lovely as an *hour*, with the most bewildering black eyes, dancing with mirth and spirit; a roguish mouth, that, smiling or pouting, was always tempting; a form, rounded and agile, that seemed perfection itself; taken all in all, it was no very great wonder that she drove Charlie to the very verge of distraction, the more so when we know that he was bashfulness personified.

This was his only fault, however, for he was handsome, brave and generous, truthful and honest as the day is long. But now he had finally resolved to decide his fate upon the occasion of this picnic, and learn the worst, if such must be.

cent easy, but unlike the generality of its genus, there were no limbs until within fifteen feet of the top, if we except one huge dead branch that extended at right-angles out over the ravine some twenty feet below the others. This limb was forked, the two sections running parallel at perhaps one foot apart.

"Please, Mr. Plummer, don't go," pleaded Annie, now thoroughly sobered at the thought of the peril he might encounter from her idle words, that had only been spoken to check the confession she felt was coming. "I couldn't eat one of them, I know; they would choke me!"

"But I can, and you must let me have my way for this once. Don't you remember how you laughed at me because I failed to gather the flowers on West Cliff? I mustn't risk another like that. But I have something to ask you when I come down, and if you say *yes*, then I will never disobey you."

"But won't *now* do as well?" innocently queried Annie. "I would consent to almost any thing rather than have you run such a risk."

I write to blush for Charlie, even as I write, for he did not profit by the hint thus conveyed. His brain whirled, and his face flushed anew, and then he stammered a few incoherent words; then made a desperate rush at the grape-vines, and before his brain was clear, had gained the topmost limbs, leaving Annie slightly pouting and a good deal alarmed below.

After a short rest, Charlie began gathering the grapes and dropping them below, when Annie ran around, with little screams of delight, nibbling at the largest and most tempting of the purple clusters that fell all around her. Plummer thought she never looked so charming as then, and from his lofty perch he could gaze down at her with eyes full of love, and without the foolishly bashful sensation that he ever felt when beside her.

It was a pretty picture to see her graceful, agile form flitting from place to place, perfectly free from the awkwardness usual under the circumstances. Her hat was cast aside, and her glossy, curling hair floated about her face and neck in most bewitching abandon; while, when she would toss it back and with dainty head bent upon one side as she glanced up at Plummer, that person felt unless he could gain her, that his lot would be wretched indeed.

"Oh, Mr. Charlie, please get me that vine just beyond you. It will make such a nice chaplet, and I sentence you to wear it all day for being so ungallant as to disobey me!"

Plummer did not reply, save by a laugh, for he was not so easy in his mind. He could see what Annie did not, and knew that there was danger to be dreaded in this new feat. To reach the vine she desired, he must venture further out upon the already strained limb, to a point where it was not the thickness of a man's wrist, and thus bend downward. Under ordinary circumstances he would not have risked it, but now, he felt that he must.

So, gently slipping along the slowly drooping limb, that already bent and swayed fearfully beneath his weight, the young man kept his gaze fixed upon the vine for which he was running such a fearful risk. Once or twice he fancied he heard a faint cracking noise behind him, and paused to listen, but thus reassured, he still advanced.

Far down beneath his feet he could distinguish the rough moss-covered rocks, and, despite his resolve, a tremor would creep along his frame, until he would close his eyes, lest his nerve should fail him and he be dashed down upon their sharp crests, to a certain death. And now the coveted grapes were almost within his grasp.

Annie, in her thoughtlessness, little dreamed of the danger she had driven her lover into, as she leaned against a huge rock, her gaze fixed upon the form above her, and a look of wonder and admiration filling her eyes.

"Oh, dear! Mr. Plummer, how long you are! They'll have eaten all the dinner up, long before we get back. Can't you reach them now?"

Charlie grasped firmly hold of the limb upon which he rested, with one hand, and then reached forward and downward with the other. His hand closed upon the vine, and then he made a desperate effort to regain his erect position. But the act was a fatal one.

Annie heard a loud crack, a wild, thrilling shriek of mortal agony or terror, a dull thud, as a dark form flashed across her vision; and then she fainted.

For some moments she remained thus, her face still turned upward toward where swayed the broken limb; but it no longer supported the manly form of her lover. This was the first object she noted as she returned to consciousness, but her wail of anguish was suddenly checked by the sight that next met her gaze.

For there, before her, swinging to and fro, between heaven and earth, was the body of Charlie Plummer! Swaying to and fro, head downwards, suspended by one foot! And from what?

In falling, Plummer had dropped upon the dead forked limb, and in this fork his foot had caught, while in falling over, it acted as a check, although the sudden force had evidently broken the bone. In his hand he still clasped the vine of grapes.

Annie saw that he was alive and conscious, and that he made several efforts to reach the limb with his hands, but in vain. Then she heard him mutter, "Go—help—" and she started up into active life with every sense fully aroused.

An instant decided her what course to pursue, and not a moment was to be lost in its execution. The road was long and rugged to where she might hope to find the pick-nickers. From where she was, Bellemont could be gained and help brought back before the others could be found.

So, with one cry of encouragement, Annie darted away, down a precipitous winding path that she had found in gathering flowers, that would save some moments; with steps as fleet and sure as those of the wild fawn, while bitter sobs almost choked her, Annie reached the Morton farm, a short distance from the town.

A sudden thought caused her to leave the path and rush up to the house, shouting for help. A long clothes-line had caught her eye, and she resolved to trust to it, rather than lose time in searching further. As she hurriedly unfastened the rope, Annie kept calling for help, but in vain; the farm had been abandoned for that day, and no one replied.

She never knew how she got back to the spot where the young man was still hanging, and once there, she was for a moment at a loss how to proceed. In answer to her repeated cries, there presently came feeble groans from the hanging form, and thus relieved from her worst fears, Annie felt encouraged to proceed.

With one end of the rope secured around her waist, the daring girl grasped the rough grape-vines, and with a whispered prayer for strength, she steadily worked her way upward. It was a terrible, trying ordeal, but now those habits that had gained for her, among the envious of her own sex, the title of hoyden, or "tom-boy," stood her in good stead, for her nerves were steeled and her head remained clear and lucid.

Then, faint and breathless, Annie gained the limbs, and paused for a moment's rest; but still she was not idle. A running noose was securely knotted and the other end fastened to the tree. Charlie was still conscious and aware that she was working for his life.

Then Annie bravely advanced along the limb, until where she could cast the rope down to the hanging man. After several vain grasps, he secured the rope, but did not appear to comprehend the use he was expected to make of it.

"Can you slip the loop over your head and arms, dear Charlie?" called out Annie, vainly striving to render her voice calm and reassuring. "Slip it over, and then wait until I tell you to pull. With your foot once free, I can lower you to the ground safely."

After a time Plummer succeeded in drawing the noose taut around his body, and then Annie, having returned to the main fork of the tree and secured the slack rope, gave the signal. Plummer, with her help, soon drew himself up by the rope until the imprisoned foot was freed. No sooner was this accomplished, than he fainted away from the pain and exertion, and fell to the end of the rope with a force that tested its strength severely. Fortunately it was new and did not fail him, and at length Annie, by cautiously allowing the rope to glide around the limb, lowered him in safety to the ground.

A blinding whirl filled her brain, and she knew nothing more until the sound of many voices shouting in unison, aroused her from the form of her lover. She bent over him with a piercing shriek, and pressed her pallid lips to his. The touch appeared like magic, for he opened his eyes, and as he clasped her to his breast, she distinguished the words:

"Annie—will you—have me?" and Charlie Plummer had proposed at last!

Well, there is but little more to add. The young couple had been missed, and searched for, but must have lain there senseless for some time before being found.

In due course of time Plummer recovered from his injury, being nursed back to health by Annie, who, I presume, had induced him to repeat the question so suddenly interrupted, for they were married over a year since, and so far as I know, have neither of them had cause during that time to regret their adventure while grape gathering.

The Letters of Blood.

BY OLL COOMES.

CHAPTER I.

A GRAND old place was Glen Farm, with its broad acres and stately mansion, its beautiful park and groves that were diversified with grand drives and shaded walks, ornamented with tiny lakes, fed by little purling streams; with its rustic benches, summer-houses, grottoes, and, in fact, every thing that art and money could procure.

Hubert Oswald was the lord and master of this princely place, and a noble, generous, benevolent and honest old soul was he. Beloved by everybody was Hubert Oswald, because Hubert Oswald was a true Christian gentleman in the strictest sense of the word. But his had been a life of great misfortunes, despite his wealth and noble principles. Death had visited and revisited his palatial home, until, at the good old age of three-score and ten, we find him a childless widower. But Hubert Oswald was a man capable of enduring life's ills as well as its fortunes, and like a true Christian, he went on fighting the great battle, hale and hearty as a man of fifty.

"But I can not last much longer," he mused to himself, one day; "the sands of life are nearly run, and when I am gone, who will preside at Glen Farm? Will the thistle and wild-rose grow where now the yellow grain is ripening? Will this grand old mansion become the abode of nocturnal visitants? Will strangers enjoy the fruits of my labors—the labor of a lifetime? No, no, God forbid! Glen Farm must and shall be inherited by Oswald blood. Where are sister Mary's children? Where are sister Martha's children? Are they dead, too? I must see—search them out!"

And so he did. Of his sisters' children, he found two—Richard Arnold and Reginald Howard, the former twenty-five years of age, the latter a year younger. He found them poor, but bearing testimonials of good

moral principles, and so he took them home to Glen Farm, and lavished all that heart could wish upon them. Both were well informed, and in them Mr. Oswald found much consolation, but alas! poor old man.

Dick and Reg, as they were called, were to inherit Glen Farm after their uncle's death as joint heirs; and in case that either died intestate, the survivor would become full owner.

The young men were like brothers in their affection, though there was a vast difference in their general natures, for while Dick was, or seemed, cold and reticent to strangers, Reg was warm and pleasant; but then Dick was always excused on the score of being the young man—heirs-apparent to Glen Farm—the nephews of good old Hubert, could have one atom of evil in their hearts. But that everybody can not read the heart in human face divine will be shown in the sequel of our story.

Unfortunately the young men both loved Judge Marsden's daughter, though neither one was aware of the other's affection for the belle of Rural City; and, unknown to Dick, Reg proposed and was accepted, and unknown to Reg, Dick proposed and of course was rejected.

As the time for Reg's marriage with Edith Marsden approached, he went and informed his cousin of the fact. He felt it a duty to do so.

Dick's brow clouded, though his cousin did not notice it, and turning away, he said: "I wish you much joy, Reginald, for Edith is a noble woman."

CHAPTER II.

A foul murder had been done! Old Hubert Oswald, the beloved old Christian gentleman, lay dead upon his library floor with two gaping wounds in his left side through which his life-blood had flowed.

Peter Wilkins, Mr. Oswald's old secretary, was the first to make the awful discovery. He had risen that morning earlier than usual, and going into the library he found the beloved old man stark and stiff, and the polished oaken floor stained with the crimson tide of life.

"Oh, Hubert! Hubert!" exclaimed the old secretary, bending over the cold form, "is not this a horrible illusion? Great Heavens, it can't be true! No, no, no!" and the old man bit his lips, and touched the brow of the dead to assure himself that the horrible sight was not reality. But alas! it was too true.

"Oh, my God, Hubert! you are dead, dead, dead! What fiend has struck you down? who was the murderer?"

"Reginald—murdered me!" The old secretary started up, his face blanched with horror and surprise. He pressed his brow as if to still his throbbing brain. He rubbed his glasses to assure himself that what he had seen was not the vision of an excited mind.

"But no, it is there! The ghastly truth!" he exclaimed, bending his eyes to the floor again; and he read again, the words that had been rudely traced with blood upon the floor.

"Reginald murdered me!" The body of the old man was lying on the left side, and the forefinger of the right hand was resting at the termination of the last letter, which fact alone convinced the old secretary that Mr. Oswald had not been murdered outright, but, being unable to call help, he had traced in letters of his own heart's blood, with his own finger upon his own floor, the name of the murderer—the hand falling motionless in death just as the last letter was finished.

"And Reginald is the murderer!" said Wilkins to himself. Vile hypocrite! Black-hearted traitor and assassin! Stung to death the bosom that gave you nourishment, as it were. But to send you to the gallows, Reginald Howard, what need is there of further proof than those letters of blood traced upon the polished floor by the hand of your victim? But I will call a servant and send for constable Bates and detective Search.

So saying, he fastened down the windows and let down the blinds, then leaving the body just as he found it, he took a revolver from a drawer and went out into the hall, closing and locking the library-door after him.

None of the household were up yet, for it was just daylight. In a few moments, however, Wilkins had them aroused by his vociferous cries of murder, and walking on tip-toe and speaking in whispers the servants came into the hall, eager to learn the horrible news. Dick and Reg came rushing into the hall terribly excited.

"Dammable hypocrite!" muttered Wilkins, as he saw the tears roll down Reginald's cheeks when he told them that their uncle had been murdered.

Assuming a look of indifference, the old secretary refused to admit any one until after the detective had examined the room, and threatened to shoot the first one who attempted to enter the library.

Constable Bates and the renowned detective James Search were soon at Glen farm. Placing Bates at the library-door with the strictest injunction to allow no one to enter, nor even see in, Wilkins and Search entered the chamber of death.

"What do you think of that?" asked Wilkins, pointing to the letters of blood. "Reginald murdered me," the detective read, then turning to Wilkins in the greatest surprise, asked:

"Were those words there when you discovered the body?"

"Yes," replied Wilkins, "and it seems to me that they are sufficient evidence of Reginald's guilt."

"Just so," replied Search, dropping on his knees before the corpse. The detective examined the wounds, the position of the body and the purple imprint of the assassin's fingers where he had clutched the old man by the throat. He had spent several minutes thus when Wilkins asked:

"Well, what do you think about it?" "Well, sir," said the detective, rising to his feet, and speaking in a low, earnest tone, "I think in the first place that Hubert Oswald never wrote these letters or words of accusation. And in the second place, Reginald Howard did not commit the murder."

"Whew!" exclaimed the old secretary, as though a terrible weight had been lifted from his heart; "that's a pretty plain contradiction of what I considered sufficient evidence to send Reg to the gallows."

"Has Reg, as you call him, a finger missing from either hand?" asked Search, thoughtfully.

"No," replied Wilkins, startled with surprise by the detective's question; "but I will tell you who has," and here he leaned

forward and whispered a name in Search's ear; then he said: "now tell me why you asked the question."

"Because the assassin had the third finger missing from the left hand. Look here; you see where the villain clutched the old man by the throat with the left hand, while, with the right, he dealt the murderous blow. Now, you see on this side of the throat the purple imprint of but three fingers, and on this side the imprint of the thumb, and on this side the imprint of the middle finger, and on this side the imprint of the ring finger, and on this side the imprint of the little finger, there is quite a space which goes to show that the third finger was missing from the hand; and, to conclude, I will stake my life that the man whose name you just now mentioned is the murderer, and, unless he is a scheming villain, I will make him commit himself before I leave Glen Farm; but, first, tell me whether any one has been in here since you discovered the murder?"

"Not a living soul but you and I."

"Then no one knows of those letters of blood?"

"I have not breathed it to a living soul."

"Good. Now take something and erase those letters entirely; then, to further my plans, Reg must be arrested for the crime."

And so the letters of blood were erased, and Reginald Howard arrested for the murder of his uncle, Hubert Oswald.

The wildest excitement prevailed when it was known that Reginald was arrested. The young man was almost stricken down with surprise and terror when he found himself in manacles, accused of murder. He did not deny the crime. He did not speak. Sorrow and humiliation choked back all utterance.

Detective Search took Dick Arnold aside, and said, in a sad tone:

"This is a sad affair, Mr. Arnold."

"Indeed it is," replied Dick, seriously.

"Have you seen your uncle since his death?"

"No, I have not seen him since yesterday noon."

"Nor been in the library this morning?"

"No, I have not. I have not been out of my room for two days until this morning. I have been confined to my bed with a spell of rheumatism."

"Well, it is a horrible affair, Mr. Arnold."

"Yes; but I never dreamed that my cousin Reg, whom we all love so well, could be guilty of such a cold-blooded crime."

"Ah, my young man, the most gentle manners and pleasant faces often conceal the workings of an evil heart."

At this moment the rumble of a carriage was heard coming down the road, and Dick and the detective glanced mechanically toward the vehicle and saw that it was Judge Marsden's family carriage, from the window of which Dick saw the pretty face of Edith Marsden shining. He seemed to forget himself for a moment, and to hide his embarrassment caused by sight of the judge's daughter, he said, in reply to the detective's last remark:

"Such seems to have been the case with Reg, though I would never have believed he committed the murder were it not for the letters of blood on the library floor that alone convict—I mean—ahem—excuse me, Mr. Search—I—"

"You have been thrown off your guard by the pretty face of Miss Marsden," said Search, breaking in, "and you have told what you did not wish to; therefore, I, Israel Search, arrest you for the murder of your uncle, Hubert Oswald. This way, Bates, with those handkerchiefs."

"Why—why, Search," gasped Dick, growing white with terror, "what do you mean?"

"Just what I say. A moment ago you told me that you had not seen your uncle since noon, yesterday; had not been in the library for two days—had not seen the body of your uncle since dead. Now, if such is the fact, how did you know there were letters of blood on the library floor, of which you just now spoke when thrown off your guard by sight of the judge's daughter? Let me answer for you in this manner: I, Richard Arnold, committed the murder. I traced those letters of blood with my own finger, and placed the finger of my uncle, so as to make it appear as though he had done the writing, before the vital spark had fled. I had every thing cleverly arranged, but, alas! the lovely face of Edith Marsden threw me off my guard!"

"I know you would speak so if you would speak the truth, Dick Arnold. Furthermore, I would say that there are such marks left upon Hubert Oswald's throat as show that the assassin had but three fingers upon the left hand, and I see that your third finger is missing from the left hand, so there is not a doubt in my mind as to your guilt."

Dick was completely stupefied with terror. He could not utter a single word. The words of the detective had such fearful, truthful meaning, that he felt the chains of criminality fastened upon him, and without the least resistance he was handcuffed and taken away to Rural City and placed in jail to await his trial at the next term of court, Judge Marsden presiding.

A coroner's inquest was held over the body of Hubert Oswald, and a verdict rendered in accordance with the facts already given.

On the day of Dick's trial the court-room was crowded to its utmost. The case lasted several hours and he was found guilty of murder in the first degree and sentenced to be hung in one month.

The moment the sentence was pronounced, the prisoner arose to his feet, and in a clear, firm voice said:

"My friends, if so I may call you, I feel no ill-will toward the jury that found me guilty, nor the judge that pronounced the sentence, nor the detective whose evidence convicted me. They have done right. I did commit the murder. It was I who traced those letters of blood on the library floor and arranged the body as Wilkins found it. I had been planning the murder for several weeks—how, and for what purpose, it is not necessary to state, but I succeeded in doing the crime and would have succeeded in implicating Reginald Howard but for detective Search. I have made this confession to remove all doubts from the minds of the inquisitive world, and because I do not intend to be made the subject of a public execution, as you now see."

The prisoner was standing near an open window fully seventy feet from the ground, and, as he concluded his confession, he turned and leaped through the window, and, falling upon a marble vase in the yard below, was instantly killed.

And thus the gallows was cheated of its dues in the heartless assassin, Richard Arnold.

Reginald Howard now became sole heir to Glen Farm. He married Edith Marsden, and in her society he finds wedded love the greatest enjoyment to which the heart could aspire.

And so ends our story of the Letters of Blood.

The College Rivals:

OR,
THE BELLE OF PROVIDENCE.

BY DR. WM. MASON TURNER,
AUTHOR OF "50,000 REWARD," "THE RUBY KING," "MABEL VANE," "MASKED MINER," ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

A RIPT IN THE SKY.

THE collegian's frame shook, the blood boiled in his veins, and the color faded from his cheeks.

Reeling like a drunken man, he staggered away toward the iron gate which was hanging ajar, as if by magic, the door of the college.

As the young man reached the street, he turned and gazed back at the familiar mansion. He started violently and gasped for breath, as his gaze shot through the brilliant lighted window and rested on two persons within.

In that parlor, Madeleine Fleming and Stephen Smith were seated on a sofa. The latter held the small hand of the former in his own strong palm, and Madeleine was looking trustingly, fearlessly into the handsome, dusky face of the Kentuckian.

They had already forgotten him, who but now had called!

Sick at heart, his brain reeling, Fenton Thorne turned away, and clenching his gloved hands together, staggered rather than walked, toward the distant college on the hill.

When he and Stephen Smith met again, there was no recognition between them. As was customary, the Kentuckian nodded his head; but Fenton Thorne noticed not the salutation. He simply fixed a dark, scowling look upon the other and passed on.

Stephen Smith started at the insulting deportment of his old chum, and for a moment a red flush swept over his swarthy face. But, as if recollecting himself, he bowed his head, while a contemptuous smile lighted the corners of his mouth, and strode on.

Several weeks passed thus—Fenton Thorne, almost every day, writing loving, burning letters to Madeleine Fleming, ending at last in accusing the maiden of treachery for her "affections to the traitor Stephen Smith."

The young man received an answer—the first for many a long, weary day of heart and soul-suffering.

The missive read thus:

"MR. THORNE: I do not love Stephen Smith; I esteem him highly as a steadfast, unflinching friend. I will be at home this evening. Oblige me by calling; and be so kind as to bring with you all of my foolish letters; also my daguerotype. Respectfully, MADELEINE FLEMING."

Clouds rushed over Fenton Thorne's brain, and a storm raged in his heart that evening, as he hurriedly walked up the gravelled way, leading from the street-gate, to the hall-door of the Fleming mansion.

He hesitated not a moment, but pulled the bell. In a moment he was admitted by John, who simply, and it seemed impertinently, pointed to the parlor-door.

Fenton Thorne, his anger almost choking him, entered the room.

Madeleine was seated on the sofa; by her side, stern, contemptuous and imperturbable, sat Stephen Smith.

"Good-evening, Madeleine—Miss Fleming," said the student, as he stood within the room, at the same time frankly reaching out his hand. He did not notice Stephen Smith at all.

Madeleine drew proudly back and refused the proffered hand. Fenton Thorne colored viciously, and his eyes snapped fire. He drew himself up grandly.

"I am here, Miss Fleming, in accordance with your request," he said, with dignity; "and I have a package for you." His voice slightly trembled.

He laid a small parcel on the piano, and taking up his hat and gloves, which he had placed on a table, he bowed and turned toward the door.

Madeleine saw the movement.

"Please be seated for a moment, Mr. Thorne," she said, hastily, her voice shaking, despite her efforts to the contrary, and the young man turned obediently, and seated himself, at some distance from the maiden.

Stephen Smith left his seat, and strolled unconcernedly toward the window—then back to the mantel.

"I did request you to come, Mr. Thorne; my object was, that we should have a clear understanding before we part forever."

She paused.

"Part! And what is all this mystery, I ask, Madeleine? What have I done that you thus treat me—thus cast me off?" demanded the young man, with fire in his eyes, and lightning in his tongue.

The maiden recoiled from that imperious voice.

At three strides Stephen Smith drew near.

"Shall I remove this impulsive youth? Speak but the word, Miss Madeleine!" and he gazed with a lowering brow at the visitor.

Fenton Thorne kept his eye upon the other, but said nothing. There was decision and determination upon his face, however.

"No, no, Mr. Smith; I beg you to be seated. You ask me, Mr. Thorne," she continued, turning to her old lover, "why I have cast you off? I have not cast you off! Nay, do not interrupt me, for our interview must be brief. I have not cast you off; but, Fenton Thorne, you have been false to me, you have cast me off! Oh! heaven!" and the girl hid her face in her hands.

Stephen Smith was now drumming fiercely—at the imminent risk of breaking it—on the glass shade over the wax-work on the mantel.

"Madeleine, what mean you?" again thundered the student.

"Are you a dissemler to my very face, as well as behind my back? Shame on you, Fenton Thorne!"

"Ay! shame on you!" hissed the Kentuckian, unable longer to hold his peace.

"Good heaven! This is too much!" groaned Fenton. "I beg you, Madeleine, by the love you once professed for me—I beg you, Stephen Smith, by the memory of our old-time friendship, to explain this hideous

affair—this black dream to me! Or, for heaven's sake, kill me at once!"

Slowly Madeleine Fleming raised her eyes, suffused with tears, to his face, and asked in trembling tones:

"And, do you not love—Myra Hoxley?" "What! I love Myra Hoxley! I loathe her, I hate her, and the ground she walks upon!" almost thundered the young man.

"Is this true, Fenton? Ah! for mercy's sake, speak—speak!"

"Speak, speak, speak on, Fent!" and Stephen Smith, his long hair falling around his dusky face, leaned over to get the answer.

"I tell you nay, I swear it! that I HATE Myra Hoxley! Heaven forgive me if I sin in so doing!"

"One word more, Fenton Thorne," and Stephen Smith scarcely breathed, as he almost sunk on his knees, to face his former friend, "where were you on the evening of the 26th of December?"

"In my room in the college—no, I forgot: I was in Professor Lincoln's study, passing my examination for entrance into the Junior class."

"And now, Fenton," and the words were scarcely audible, "read this letter, and then tell me if you know the hand which penned these words."

The maiden scarcely breathed, and her eyes stared, almost unmeaningly, in the face of the collegian.

A hurried glance over the letter, and a dark, meaning frown settled on Fenton Thorne's face. He crushed the sheet in his nervous grasp.

"And, you do not see through this wicked trick?" he asked, in a husky whisper. "Where are your eyes, Stephen Smith, that you do not detect in every line, and every word, a forgery—RALPH ROSS, THE FORGER?"

"Ay! ay! Fool that I was! I'll break every bone in his body!" and the Kentuckian uttered a loud cry of triumph, as he gathered his long-estranged friend to his bosom.

And Madeleine quietly, tenderly folded her arms around that dear form, and murmured:

"Take back the letters—keep the daguerotype, my darling!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

TIDINGS OF THE ROVER.

TIME was on the wing; days, weeks and months sped by; but there came no news of the long-absent craft, the gallant old tea-ship.

Many a sleepless night, and many a weary watching day had gone by with Arthur Fleming. The old man was haggard under the fearful anxiety.

Many ships had sailed in, from over the distant seas; but they brought to the anxious merchant no information of his old ship. It was a terrible tax on the poor father, and in sadness and silence he groped about his splendid mansion.

But Madeleine was rosy again; a joyous smile was now ever upon her lip, and the rich tints of health bloomed again in her cheeks. The maiden was now satisfied in the abiding love of Fenton Thorne; of course she was happy. She scarcely, for a moment, weighed her father's troubles; for she was rich again in the love of a noble, trusting soul.

For fear we may forget it, it may be remarked here that soon after the joyous reconciliation between the lovers, and Stephen Smith as an interested third party, on that memorable night in the Fleming mansion, the Kentuckian had studiously sought out Ralph Ross.

Once the men had met; it was in front of the chapel, and Stephen Smith, with angry, impatient steps, had advanced upon the other. But before even words could pass, the venerable President of the University—the old man well beloved—had drawn near. When he had passed, Ralph Ross had disappeared.

After that, months sped by before the students again encountered one another; for Ross had, for a time, withdrawn from college on the plea of ill-health.

At this report, Stephen Smith smiled grimly.

Six months afterward Ralph Ross made his appearance once again at college; but the Kentuckian's blood had cooled, and now he sought no conflict with the man.

Madeleine Fleming, happy in her own heart, would not admit to her bosom the sorrows and troubles of others. She feared no more the ominous revelations of soothsayers and clairvoyants, and thought not again of Madame Felice Dupliche, who, by the by, in the mean time, had left for parts unknown.

Madeleine was very happy, and by dint of many entreaties, had persuaded her father to celebrate her birth-night, now again rapidly approaching.

The struggle in the old man's bosom was severe. He would not willingly incur such an expense; and then the Rover! she was not yet in! and there were no tidings of her. But he could not refuse the earnest pleading of his daughter, and her powerful point that in case he had no celebration, "it would look so strange!" had wondrous weight with the old man. He could not well go again to Niagara for another winter-view of the "Falls!"

He had fondly expected the Rover in, before this trying time.

However, he determined to make the effort, come what would. He would, to the last, keep up appearances—for Madeleine's sake!

Invitations were duly issued, in the same old elegant style, and not one of the former friends and acquaintances was omitted. Old Welcome Hoxley and Myra, as well as Ralph Ross, received the perfumed cards, requesting their company.

Madeleine Fleming was forgiving; there was no cloud now on her heart, and she could afford to overlook the shortcomings and treachery of her most inveterate foe—those foes merely suspected.

The time rolled around; the eventful evening again settled down over the city. Again the Fleming mansion was all aglow from attic to basement; again flashing equipages swept up to the stately entrance; again the brilliant chandeliers gleamed down on crumpling folds of rich silks and satins, on glossy broadcloth, on flashing diamonds and burning rubies. Again all was happiness and glow.

Even old Welcome Hoxley, clad in the extreme of richness and fashion, was at the mansion.

This was singular, and Arthur Fleming, the host, felt a cold tremor fit over his person, as his old enemy and rival came forward to greet him and wish him and his daughter the compliments of the occasion.

The old manufacturer had come late; but, as if to make amends for his tardiness,

his face was wreathed in smiles, and his voice was silvery in sweetness.

Myra, too, was there, all sparkle and splendor; her escort was Ralph Ross. Of course the rich manufacturer's daughter was amiable; but we dare not analyze the feelings which rioted in her bosom.

Stephen Smith, sober, staid and dignified, was there, all politeness, gallantry and good-humor; and arm-in-arm with his old chum, Fenton Thorne, bowed his way, as if perfectly at home, through the crowded rooms.

Gaily fled the festive hours; and amid the infectious joy of the hour, even the morose and anxious host—his dark, dreary thoughts ever wandering far away after the missing Rover—felt his sad heart grow lighter, and the sluggish life-current beat and flow faster, as he hearkened to the jocund laughter—the merry cut-and-thrust of jest and repartee.

But in the midst of the hilarity, all of a sudden, the hall-bell sounded loud and warningly.

In an instant an ominous, deathlike silence crept—no one knew why—over the large assembly. Then confused murmurs were heard without; and in a moment, John, the serving-man, hastily entered the parlor and crowded his way toward old Arthur Fleming. He handed a sealed note to his employer.

Reckless of the presence of the company, regardless of etiquette, the old merchant, with greedy, trembling fingers, tore open the frail envelope. Then, on the unfolded half-sheet his eye fell.

One glance, and a low, heart-piercing wail broke from his lips. He staggered back and clutched wildly in the air, sunk into the strong arms of Stephen Smith.

The fatal sheet fluttered softly away, and settled upon the rich carpet. Then the old man, with a sudden effort, tottered to his feet, and as a wild, maddening fire flashed from his eyes, he exclaimed, with a maniac's gibber:

"Ha! ha! She has gone down! And I—ha! ha! The cloud is black, and shows no silver lining! Ha! ha! Who said it? Yet—yes—yes! I am a beggar! How on ye fiends, for the Rover has gone down!"

Stephen Smith's arms closed again, firmly, about the fainting form of the old man, and the Kentuckian bore him gently and softly away.

Slowly, gloatingly, Welcome Hoxley stooped and picked up the crushed sheet. Then, amid an awful silence, he read, aloud:

"New York, December 18th, 1855.
"A. J. FLEMING, Providence, R. I.:
"Brig 'Rattler' just in. When rounding the Horn, reports picking up small boat—'Rover' painted on the stern. The Rover has gone down in a gale."
THOMAS EDWARDS, Agent."

CHAPTER XXIV.

OUT IN THE COLD.

Woe and desolation had indeed settled over the lordly Fleming mansion. No rattling carriage now rolled up to the broad entrance; no sympathizing friends by scores, as on the festive birth-night, crowded there to speak words of comfort and cheer.

The dreadful secret had been divulged; it had been torn forth from the anguish-bosom of a poor, gibbering maniac. Friends, falsely so called, had already turned their backs upon him around whom they had lately fawned.

The mansion was closed—its windows sadly shut, as if death had entered there. The crazy father and the stricken daughter were alone in their misfortune and misery.

Even John, the domestic, and old Martha, the housekeeper, had already turned up their contemptuous noses; and having received their wages—paid from Madeleine's scanty pin-money—had shaken the dust of the disreputable mansion from their respectable shoes, and gone to seek employment elsewhere.

And old Arthur Fleming, striding up and down the limits of the library—not his any longer—cried and laughed by times, tore his white locks from his aged head, and knelt down devoutly before a miniature model of his lost tea-ship, and prayed, with streaming eyes and piteous, pleading words, for the Rover to come back!—to bring home to him her sunken cargo, lying beneath the black waves.

And Madeleine, cowering there as she watched the old, broken form, prayed, too! But her prayer was that the Night would come—that the Grave would swallow up all sorrow and every heart-ache.

Yet the inmates of the Fleming mansion were not forgotten by all.

On the very next morning, after the fatal birth-night festival, two young gentlemen, sober and dignified in demeanor

played type, that the house and grounds were for sale at an early day.

The day of sale rolled around, and with it came crowds of curiosity-seekers, idle ones, wishing to get a glimpse of the poor, impoverished Arthur Fleming, now stark mad!

The house was sold; and then an hour of long-looked-for, undisguised triumph, came for Welcome Hoxley; for he was the purchaser.

The old manufacturer's chuckle of satisfaction had nearly gained for him, despite his gray hairs, a chastisement at the hands of Stephen Smith.

Late on the afternoon of the day of sale, a close carriage drove away from the rear gate of the mansion. It took the unfrequented streets, until it reached the spreading, wooded country; then it dashed rapidly over the Bay Road, skirting the Narraganset, and leading down toward Vne de l'Eau.

Within that carriage sat Madeleine Fleming, mute and in tears—her heart bowed down. By her side cowered her old father, moaning to himself, and gibbering about the sunken Rover. Opposite, eloquent in his silence, sat Fenton Thorne, the collegian.

On the box outside, alongside the driver, as if defying the jeers of the world, and to show his perfect independence, sat Stephen Smith.

At half-past eight o'clock that night the carriage halted before the rustic gate of the little cottage, nestled under the bluff near Vne de l'Eau, and to which we have before referred.

Thither the two stricken ones had retreated.

The cottage had been nicely fitted up for their reception; and Madeleine's eyes filled with tears of gratitude as she observed here further evidences of friendship from a source she knew full well.

Alas! that we should be called upon to record it! The creditors of Arthur Fleming were not satisfied with the sale of the fine mansion. They ferreted him out in his humble home.

Again a placard was posted, again a sale was held, and once more, as if his triumph was not complete, Welcome Hoxley purchased the cottage.

What cared he for expense, so that he gained thereby a conquest over his ancient rival? His factories—though they were not insured—brought him piles of money! With the income of a single month, he could pay for both mansion and cottage!

This time it required all the stern counsel of Fenton Thorne to prevent Stephen Smith from thrashing the hard-hearted purchaser.

Madeline and her helpless father were, at last, out in the cold, uncharitable world. Still, however, they were not forsaken; for the heroism with which Fenton Thorne and his friend, the Kentuckian, clung to the outcasts was grand.

A month had elapsed, and we find father and daughter domiciled in a small, retired dwelling on Broad street. Fenton and Stephen, to the extent of their ability, still aided them; but Madeline had long since determined to go out into the world and battle for herself. Nor could arguments dissuade her from her undertaking.

And the girl did go out into the world; but she was everywhere turned away. In her distress, she applied to Welcome Hoxley for employment in his mills. That cold-hearted man had repulsed her with scorn.

At last she succeeded in getting needlework; and all day long the maiden bowed over her work, and prayed for strength and contentment, as the tears trickled silently through her thin fingers.

And Arthur Fleming, broken, and wasting away, passed long hours moaning and groaning, and talking foolishly about the long-missing Rover.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 44.)

The Sioux's Revenge.

BY "BRUIN" ADAMS.

A SINGULAR scene was transpiring, just at sunset, on the parade-ground of one of our frontier forts.

The men were drawn up in a hollow square, in the center of which stood the company drummer, holding in his hand a heavy lash, which he was evidently about to apply to the naked back of an Indian who was tied up to the flag-staff.

The signal was given, and the weighty thong descended upon the bronzed flesh, causing it to quiver and work convulsively, but eliciting no cry or groan from the stoical red-man of the plains.

The stated number of blows had fallen. Justice or vengeance, it might be either, was satisfied.

The savage was released, and picking up his blanket, which he threw over his lacerated shoulders, he slowly left the parade and made his way out of the fort to the open plain beyond.

The fellow had been caught stealing, and as it was his second or third offense, Col. R—, commanding post, had ordered his punishment.

Two years subsequent to the event narrated above, and just as the sun was fairly above the horizon, a merry party of ladies and gentlemen, the latter officers of the post principally, emerged from the gateway, and in couples rode down the river in the shade of the trees that fringed its bank.

A picnic at the "Devil's Bluff" was the order of the day.

Some five miles below, a bold, rocky headland projected out into the stream, lifting its rugged crest and steep sides high above the surrounding landscape, and, upon the river front or side, rising sheer from the water, a smooth wall without break or fissure for more than two hundred feet.

Well it might be named Devil's Bluff, for a more rugged, scraggy, and withal dangerous-looking place, it would be hard to find.

But the surroundings were lovely.

Deep, cool ravines, unexpected springs bubbling out in unexpected places, smooth, soft banks, green and mossy, upon which to recline—in fact, everything that goes toward making up a first-class picnic-ground.

But to many there was a depressing influence about the place, for over and above all towered Devil's Bluff, dark, grim, threatening.

Lovely women and young girls were in this little holiday party, but none were considered so beautiful as the only daughter of Col. R—, the commandant, who had just returned from the East, whither she had been to complete her education.

It was in her honor, and for her pleasure, that the party had been made, and certainly

none seemed to enjoy it with more zest than she.

The morning passed pleasantly by; luncheon was served and partaken of with appetites quickened by the pure air and healthful exercise, and then, separating as best suited their fancies, the young people wandered over the charming place.

The afternoon wore away, and nearly all were assembled near the open glade where dinner had been served, preparing for the return.

"Where is Ethel?" asked some one, and as if in answer, a long, piercing shriek rung out, evidently proceeding from a clump of timber near the base of the bluff.

In a body the officers sprung forward in the direction whence the sound had proceeded, but before they had passed half the distance, one of their number suddenly paused, and, with pallid face and strained eyes, pointed upward toward the summit of the bluff.

"My God! look there!" was all he said.

Far up the rugged side they saw the flutter of a white dress, and as they gazed, a feeble cry for help came floating down.

Instantly a field-glass was brought to bear; a single glance, and with the exclamation: "It is the Sioux, Ha-wan-glee-ta!" the officer bounded up the steep sides of the cliff like a hunted chamois.

Who was Ha-wan-glee-ta? asked half a dozen anxious voices, as they watched the form of an Indian warrior struggling upward, bearing in his arms the missing girl, Ethel R—.

It was the Indian whom the colonel had had whipped on the parade two years ago, was the explanation of some one.

And such, indeed, was the case.

For two years the savage had nursed his revenge, keeping it warm until the time to strike had come.

The hour had arrived, and he had struck. Two or three others started after the officer who first went up, but he was now far in advance, rapidly closing with the Indian, who, burdened as he was, could not move so swiftly as his pursuer. Those who had begun the ascent, seeing that their aid would come too late, paused upon a projecting ledge, and looked upward to watch the efforts of their comrade.

Higher, still higher, the Sioux warrior climbs, while behind the gallant officer presses on, to save, perhaps, and if not, to avenge.

With a shrill yell of defiance and exultation combined, the warrior leaps upon the narrow platform that crowns the summit. The helpless girl lies quietly in his arms, for she has fainted and is happily unconscious of her awful peril.

The savage's object is only too plain. He will cast her from the giddy height, or perhaps leap out into the empty void, bearing her with him. Oh, the agony of that moment to the watching friends below!

As the yell left the lips of the Indian, he lifted his burden lightly aloft, and for an instant held her there so that all might see.

The movement was fatal to his purpose, and to his life as well.

Quick as thought the officer raised the revolver he carried in his hand, and resting it upon his bent left arm, glanced through the sights. The bravest breast of the savage was freely exposed. Then the ball sped, true to the mark. As the weapon cracked, the savage was seen to shrink, then drop his burden, and, staggering one pace backward, fall from view.

And now, a moment of awful suspense! With active bounds the officer sped upward. He was seen to stoop down upon the summit, almost instantly rising again, holding in his arms the still insensible form of Ethel. A glad shout went ringing down, telling those below that she was safe from harm or hurt. Then forest, rock and river rolled back the echoing shouts of joy. Those that went up found the young girl slowly struggling back to consciousness, while, near at hand, lay the vengeful Sioux, a red spot upon his broad chest, directly over the heart, showing how swift had been the messenger of death in performing its work. I would be glad to weave a bit of a romance, and tell how the gallant officer was rewarded, etc., etc.; about bridal wreaths and vails, but I dare not depart from the truth, for, alas! the rescuer was already married and the happy possessor of a growing family!

Cruiser Crusoe: OR, LIFE ON A TROPIC ISLE.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFORREST.

NUMBER FIFTY-ONE.

The settlement we had selected under the great trees was in every respect an unexceptionable one; but with a large and increasing colony, there were several considerations to be entered upon, which occupied much of our attention. We were tolerably well supplied with fire-arms, and powder was as yet plentiful; but if we were discovered by a large body of savages, who had been accustomed to white men, they might sufficiently disregard our weapons to make a fearful and sudden onslaught, when, after discharging our guns, we should be comparatively helpless.

Several plans of fortification were suggested in solemn council, but one at last was hit upon which I think was the best that could have been devised. A sufficient space to surround our village was staked out, the stakes chosen being of such trees as were likely to take root. Within these were planted a number of dwarf and prickly palms; while without, prickly pears, a plant that abounded at no great distance, were stuck in the ground in such a way as necessarily, if allowed to grow, would make a fortification impenetrable to naked savages.

There could be no doubt that the next rainy season would cause them all to take solid root, while even the heavy evening dews would give them a start.

But this was only the redoubt. Now remained the fort.

I had remarked that two of the huge trees—ninety feet before they had any branches, and at least thirty feet in circumference—were exactly of a size, and stood out about twelve feet apart. Now, this attracted my attention all the while the stockade was being made; and my course of proceeding, after consultation with my ministers, was as follows:

A number of strong trunks of trees were cut down, while the negroes went out in search, with the cattle, of heaps of bamboos. These were then with care converted into ladders of about twelve feet each in length.

Then, at a height of twelve feet, holes were bored into each tree sufficiently deep to receive the ends of the sturdy poles already prepared. Sufficient of these being placed across, in the next place a flooring of bamboo, with a parapet four feet high, was erected. Then, again, another ladder was placed against the tree; and at twelve feet above the former one, another flooring made, and so on, until the very summit of the tree was gained. Then, by cutting branches away, and combining art with nature, a splendid platform was formed, on which every member of the colony could have taken refuge; while, to our great delight, it also gave us a fine view of the sea.

It was at once decided to call this Look-out Castle, while it was further determined to erect a flag-staff, on which a kind of signal could be erected, in the distant hope of being seen some day by a passing ship.

It must not be supposed that we devoted all our time to this task. The day was divided into two parts, one of which was given to the general good of the colony, the other to individual interest. In this way the huts were improved, animals were captured, fish taken, and all the details of everyday life carried out.

The house which I and Polly were to inhabit was situated on a slope at the back of the trees, quite away from the general habitations. It was to be a house of two rooms, with one story, and a sloping roof, sufficiently high to contain stores. The workmen consisted of myself, my younger brothers, and Cudjoe, and never did master have more willing assistants. There we would adjourn, after our mid-day meal, and, with a goodly supply of wood and bamboo, go to work, though a discovery which I had made, caused after a while, a change in part of my arrangements.

While digging a channel by which fresh water might always be secured to the village, the negroes informed me that they had fallen on an immense supply of clay, which I no sooner heard than I resolved that my house should be built in a great measure of coarse adobe and burnt bricks, which would serve in the rainy season to keep out the rain, and at all times the wind and sun. These adobes were simply square lumps of clay, coarsely fashioned, with smooth pieces of wood, and then laid one above the other between the uprights and bamboos of my hut, until they reached to six feet high, when the sloping roof commenced. By this means, as the clay retained something of its humidity, the extreme heat of the climate soon baked it into a solid mass.

At this stage of our proceedings, it was announced by me that it was time to attend to our harvest, and the delight of all was great, for an exploration of my island was what all intimately desired. The whole of the colonists without exception were to be of this party, as it was pre-determined, under the rough kind of imaginary constitution which we acted upon, that all cultivations and inclosures were to be for the good of all. Of course, then, all were expected to work.

Everybody was at liberty to hunt for himself, fish for himself, make him or herself a garden, but such general stores as gunpowder, grain, European vegetables, the dwellers in my pig-pen and gazelle valley were to be fairly distributed in equal portions.

The road which led to the part of my island where my cave and old fort were situated was good enough to admit of sledges, so two were constructed which were drawn by the cattle. On these were placed such things as we required, and then my mother and the children, Polly, Emily, and Pabina, preferred walking ahead with me, while close behind came the whole body of men and women armed to the teeth.

The sight of the bridge which had been constructed across the river excited general admiration, but when, after two days' journey, I contrived to show my friends round to the valley of the gazelles, their delight knew no bounds, and not a discontented voice was heard when I proposed to camp there, during the operations of harvest, which were to be carried out as much as possible during the morning hours.

This valley had changed very much since I had introduced my flock. The addition of the large meadow which had succeeded the damp canebrake, the growth of the stream, caused by the long line of graceful palm trees, had made it as rich and fertile a valley as any in the world. But still it was quite evident the flock required thinning. They had cropped the grass closely and came running to me in search of food.

"There are too many," said my father. "A few may be killed," I replied, "and others taken to Look-out Castle. But get over the palings presently, when I give a loud call, and you will see my remedy."

I vaulted across, after some further directions, and going up the valley reached its mouth. Then all came driving the flocks before them, while I had, in the mean time, opened the gate which separated the valley from the old crater, into which the whole herd of gazelles and ostriches rushed with great delight. That part of their pasturage was fresh and green, so that there was no hurry to take any measures at all.

But my younger brother and Cudjoe were lost in astonishment and delight at the ostriches, and declared that if they had any tame animals it would be these, while the girls might keep gazelles if they liked. I agreed to please them all, and then proposed to visit my pig-pen, which was near to my corn and other fields. I lingered behind with Caesar, however, and caught a fat buck, determined that evening there should be a rare feast.

I found all my friends impatient to see every thing, and had at once to lead them to the piggery, which we found in a great uproar, the population having increased rather too much. This was easily remedied also, as the negroes were fond of pork and would gladly keep pigs round about the village. Not, however, to keep the poor animals hungry, all the women and children were dispatched for a load of vegetables and vegetable tops. As soon as their backs were turned we began furnishing them with food in a novel kind of way. About half a dozen fierce old boars were making frantic efforts to get at us. These we shot. The next, alarmed at first, retreated, but recovering themselves, in a few minutes returned to the charge, and before the women, guided by Pabina, came back with two sledge-loads of carrots, swedes and turnips, the bones of the unfortunate boars were picked clean, this animal being averse to no kind of food whatever.

Then when the rage of hunger was partly appeased, the negroes succeeded in catching a porker or two for their supper. That evening, what with the wild fruits I pointed out, what with gazelle flesh, pork, and vegetables, we had a feast worthy of a civilized

country, and retired betimes to rest with a view to commencing our duties early.

To reap and carry off all that we had sown and planted would have been no easy task, had I not have organized a system of division of labor. Several of the negro women knew how to make wicker-baskets, all the females taught by Pabina could make grass baskets, so that next day, while some procured the raw material and laid it down in the burning sun to dry, the women having found a shady baobab tree, sat down to commence their labors.

A ample supply having been obtained of all the basket-makers required, they set to work. The wicker-baskets were for the vegetables, the grass for corn and other seeds.

Then, while four of us, with rude sickles, made by sharpening swords, cut the corn, the younger folks, under the orders of Captain John Thomas, carried the sheaves and laid them on the outer edge of a large circle which I had myself marked out, for what purpose no one could divine. This occupied two days. I then brought a smile on the faces of all by declaring that I would thrash the corn myself, while the others continued their harvest.

But all were too curious to watch my process, to leave, so I had to begin work in view of all. In the exact center, by measurement, of the circle, I had a post buried first and then beat firmly in the earth. Over this I passed the looped-end of a long lariette or cocoa-nut fiber rope, to which I harnessed the buffalo by his horns, the zebra and horse by their necks, after which, with loud shouts and slashing of a long whip—myself standing in the center of the circle—I made them gallop round.

Loud shouts greeted my invention, though all declared the corn would not be fit for use. I smiled, dismissed them to their labors and bade them await the result. By the time the labors of the day were finished, my animals, even with long intervals of rest had done their work. As soon as my friends rejoined me I had all the straw removed, and there, mixed with much that was certainly disagreeable, was my corn.

Next morning I selected a spot of hard, bare, volcanic rock, which was swept of every plant. It was a kind of hollow, surrounded by a large boulder. On this I stationed a negro. Luckily the wind was high. Every scrap of corn, dirt and all, was carried to him, and by him poured out into the hollow below. Every atom of chaff and all the dust was thus carried off, after which the corn was passed through a sieve of cocoa-nut fiber, and then packed in grass baskets for removal to the great store-house.

This was commenced the next day by Andrew and one of the negroes, who started with two sledges, with as much as they could carry. All that was required for seed was stored in a deep hole and carefully covered over. In this way, by mutual industry and diligence, and by division of labor, in a fortnight the harvest was in and we were at leisure to return home.

Our caravan was larger than before, for each of the negroes had a pig, which for their own convenience they meant to let loose on a fertile tract of land, surrounded on all sides by water, near the settlement; while the whites had secured each a gazelle, and my two brothers and Cudjoe an ostrich apiece, sufficiently young to hold out a reasonable prospect of being tamed.

Various other luxuries, as turtle, tortoise' eggs, fish and fowl, had been provided, for now that the harvest was over and duty had been attended to—was I not about to be married?

The Gambler's Fate.

BY TOM KEENE.

"You lie, you scoundrel!" were the words that burst upon our startled ears, instantly followed by the loud report of a pistol, and the speaker, a young planter from somewhere below Natchez, if I remember rightly, staggered, reeled, and fell to the floor corpses.

He lay upon his back, his feet against one of the state-room doors, the gaping, ragged hole in his forehead telling where the messenger of death had struck him. The murderer, a slightly-built, well-dressed, and rather handsome young man, stood calmly by, his arms folded across his bosom, and his cold, gray eye gazing steadily down upon the man he had just slain. The weapon, a large-sized derringer, lay upon the table where he had placed it after firing.

It would be impossible to describe the excitement that ensued.

The murdered man was known to be of a good family, respectable and wealthy, while the murderer was a professional blackleg, one of the very worst of his class, and who, if rumor was to be believed, had perpetrated this same terrible crime on more than one occasion previous to this.

"Kill him! Lynch him! Throw him overboard!" were some of the many furious cries that arose as the excited multitude surged back and forth along the cabin of the steamer.

Calm, cool, almost indifferent, the gambler stood, preserving the same attitude, all the while regarding the maddened crowd that closed around him with a bitter sneer, as though defying them to attack.

His fate seemed sealed beyond all hope, for already there were many hands stretched forth to seize him, when high above the din rose the stentorian voice of Captain L—, calling for order, and asserting his supremacy over all on that boat.

The crowd parted as the huge form of the officer made his way through them. Laying his hand upon the blackleg's shoulder, and wrenching him around so as to bring him face to face, he said, sternly: "Ned Arbuckle, why did you shoot that man?"

"He called me a scoundrel, and said I lied," was the cool response. "And for that you shot him! You had won all his money, you villain; was not that enough?"

The change that flashed over the pale face of the murderer, as the captain bestowed the epithet upon him, was perfectly appalling. Brave men drew back involuntarily and sought their weapons.

"I suppose you would like to serve me the same," said the captain, noting the change. "But, dare to make a movement, and by the living God, I'll have you thrown into the furnace."

Even this fearful threat had no other effect than to call forth a renewed sneer.

"What have you to say that I should not let these men wreak vengeance on you?" continued Captain L—.

"Give them the word, and see if they'll

try it," was the calm response. Then, suddenly changing his attitude, and thrusting his hand deep within his bosom, he added: "They're a set of cowards, all of them, and I defy them."

What the result of the desperate man's challenge would have been I know not, though the click, click, click of pistols being cocked was heard throughout the assembly; for, at that moment, a new excitement suddenly arose, one that quickly brought matters to a climax.

It was the sound of a woman's voice, rendered shrill and harsh by a terrible sorrow. "My brother, oh, my brother!" and a young girl, her fair hair sweeping in disheveled masses over her shoulders, burst through the crowd that stood round, and, with a wailing sob, threw herself upon the body.

That was enough. A spark heedlessly dropped into an open magazine would not have been quicker in producing the explosion than was that heart-broken cry. "Burn the scoundrel!" shouted some one, and they closed in upon their victim.

But he had evidently been prepared for some such chance.

Out from his bosom flashed the broad, keen blade of a bowie-knife, whirling aloft in rapid circles, cutting this way and that, in front, on either side and behind, as he clove a passage across the saloon to the door that led out to the guards.

His assailants could not fire for fear of injuring each other, and so quick were the murderer's movements that no hand could grasp and stay his flight.

Not until he was half-way up the steps that led to the hurricane roof was a pistol fired. He was hit, for he staggered as he gained the roof, but still he continued to hurl bitter curses and bolder defiance at his pursuers. Back along the deck he dashed, under a perfect storm of bullets.

Reeling, staggering, tottering like a drunken man, he went, and at length paused at the furthest part of the boat, directly over the stern.

Here he turned and faced the enraged multitude.

"Fire, you cowards!" he exclaimed, spreading wide both arms.

The sharp rattle of firearms was the answer, and with a last curse of hatred and defiance upon his lips, the murderer pitched headlong into the seething water beneath.

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All among the hay.	Newspaper song.
As long as the world goes.	On St. Patrick's day.
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Fascinating swell.	The hen coquet.
Fasc	

HE TOLD ME THAT HE LOVED ME.

BY LOUISE MALCOM STENFON.

When he told me that he loved me, my heart stood still, and then, in gladness, I went forth for a, in earnest love for him.

I love him dearly, fondly, as I love naught else on earth—God grant I ne'er shall rue the hour, that gave this warm love birth.

When he told me that he loved me, I thought 'twas but a dream. A mirage of the desert, an *ignis fatuus* gleam. Of brilliant, rosy happiness, a sparkling sylvan stream. For love was in all ages man's favorite thrilling theme.

When he told me that he loved me, I feared 'twas but a jest. It seemed too like a fairy dream, to be so fondly best. My starling soul, long tempest-tossed, had found no home to rest. Till like a wounded dove it clung to his broad, manly breast.

When he told me that he loved me, methought my heart was dead. That all its dreamy romance and deep sentiment had fled. But I found his heart a magnet, his love a magic power—He chained my spirit captive, in that golden sunset hour.

Since he told me that he loved me, life wears a brighter hue. My eyes oft fill with happy tears, like diamond drops of dew. As the stars wink at me nightly, as if they only knew. The secret that I could not tell, e'en to a chosen few.

Mayhap he told me that he loved me, to wit's a weary hour—To prove as with electric flash, his mystic, potent power. And thrill my inmost being, with his fond, expressive gaze. Intending soon to cast aside and let my warm love blaze.

If he jests that he loved me, in those glowing, burning words. That ravished all my inmost soul, like sweetest songs of birds—My heart would break, yet brokenly, a loving chime would ring. As in the olden fables, snowy swans in dying sing!

Black-mailed ;

OR, THE WIFE'S FOE.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

It was quite late in the afternoon, when Mrs. Hustler was startled by the silvery tones of the door-bell.

She turned from the Venetian mirror in which she had been admiring the reflection of her beautiful self, and hurried toward the front entrance. The task of answering the bell had, that day, fallen to her, for the servants were visiting relations in different parts of the city, and her husband was at the great banking house of Hustler & Swain.

When she opened the door, a tall man, passably handsome, and fashionably and to some extent foppishly clad, greeted her with a stiff bow.

"Mrs. Rosaline Hustler, I believe," he said, half interrogatively.

"You are right, sir."

"I am the bearer of an important message from your husband."

"A message from Harold?" cried Mrs. Hustler, extending her hand. "Be so kind as to deliver it at once."

"It is a verbal message, ma'am," replied the man, "and must be delivered in the strictest privacy."

The banker's wife unhesitatingly led the way to the richly-appointed parlor, where she suddenly paused, and, with manifest impatience, commanded the messenger to speak. He replied by doffing his hat, drawing his form to its true stature, and gazing with an insulting leer into her now frightened face.

"Rosaline, do you not recognize me?" he said, at last, breaking the silence which was becoming oppressive.

The lady did not deign him immediate reply. She stepped across the room, and drew aside the rich damask curtains, that the gorgeous rays of the setting sun might fall upon his face.

Then she confronted him, and having gazed for a moment into his dark, scintillating eyes, started back, shrieking his name:

"Selwyn St. Selwyn!"

The man did not speak again, until he had enjoyed the beautiful woman's terror to his evil heart's content.

"I thought you would not fail to recognize me upon whose bosom you have reclined," he said. "I am not the bearer of a message from your husband, as you have divined ere this. To come to my business at once, Mrs. Rosaline Hustler—I came hither for money."

He gazed upon Rosaline, still a statue of terror, but she did not speak.

"You may recollect that when we parted in Natchez, I refused to return those sweetly-scented *billet doux*, penned by your delicate hand. In them you bestowed upon me every pretty name in Cupid's vocabulary. I still possess those loving epistles; but I am here to tell you that, for three hundred dollars, they shall be destroyed. You loved me once, Rosaline. You may deny it now, but the letters will prove you a liar. I know your husband. Did he know that you once loved such a fiend as I, he would drive you from this magnificent mansion—he would curse and spit upon you."

Mrs. Hustler knew that Selwyn St. Selwyn's last sentence contained nothing but truth. Her noble, loving husband must not know that she once loved the polluted being who stood, a black-mailer, in her presence. She loved St. Selwyn when she reigned the belle of Natchez. She bestowed her smiles upon him a long time, until she discovered him to be an unprincipled gambler, who was concerned in the murder of a young Northerner on a Mississippi steamer. Then she spurned him from her presence, and shortly afterward became the bride of Harold Hustler, the young banker of New York.

When her husband took her to his Northern home, she thought she would never stand face to face with her former lover again. But she had built upon delusive hopes, as the reader has seen.

"Mr. St. Selwyn, what assurance have I that the letters will be destroyed upon the payment of the sum demanded?"

"My word."

"Which is a gambler's."

"True; but it is not honorless," he answered. "Rosaline, I swear by the Creator that your letters shall be burned if you comply with my wishes."

Rosaline saw that she was in his power, and believed that he would keep his vow in

violate. Poor woman! she was the ward of the night of perfection attained by the infernal system of black-mail at the present day.

Drawing her private purse, Rosaline placed three one-hundred-dollar bills in the black-leg's hands.

"Now depart, Selwyn St. Selwyn," cried the little woman, pointing toward the door. "Fulfill your self-imposed oath, and never darken my doorway again."

He thrust the bank-notes into his pocket, crossed the threshold with a not meaningless smile, bowed with mock gallantry, and left the mansion.

"Now I am safe," murmured Rosaline, with a sigh of relief. "I will never confront the gambler again."

The banker's wife was not long in discovering that Selwyn was not a tenant of the gambler's breast, for a week after his first visit he was on hand again demanding four hundred dollars for his silence.

The sum was placed in his hands, and he again courted fortune over the green cloth. But the fickle goddess had deserted him, and again and again he drew on his victim's exchequer.

At last, Rosaline determined to become the possessor of the letters. She summoned a detective to her palatial residence, and offered him a good round sum for the fourteen fatal missives.

The man-hunter set to work immediately. He entered St. Selwyn's room during his absence, and searched it, but without the desired result. The letters must be upon the villain's person. Thus concluded Mark Markley, the detective, and one evening, disguised, and with the aid of two persons, he decoyed the gambler into a gloomy alley.

The detective and a strong man held St. Selwyn down while a *gamin* searched his person. The packet was not found!

Almost crazed at the result of the detective's labor, yet not brave enough to confess her wrong to her husband; but, resolved upon desperate means to gain possession of the letters, Rosaline longed for the reappearance of her leech.

Of late, ere he departed, he was wont to display the packet, and taunt her in sarcastic tones.

One afternoon he stalked into the parlor unbidden.

"Twelve hundred dollars to-day, my dear Rosaline," he cried, in a tone which was the incarnation of arrogance.

Rosaline sprang to her feet, drew a revolver from her bosom, and leveled it at the black-mailer's head.

"My letters or your life!" she cried, with the aid of a woman driven, as she had seen to the wall of desperation.

St. Selwyn trembled as he stood speechless before his victim. The color fled from his cheeks when he gazed into the death-frightened chamber of steel, and with a horrible oath, he tore the packet from an inner pocket and cast it at her feet!

"Go!" she exclaimed, with an air of triumph, as she covered the letters with a foot. "Tell Harold of my love of other days, if you wish; but think you he will believe your story without the proofs—these letters? Never!"

Suddenly the great villain strode from the mansion, and Rosaline consigned the letters to the flames.

The gambler did not approach Harold Hustler with the story of his young wife's first love, but left the city and fell on the field of battle during the late civil war.

Many days after the wresting of the letters from the black-mailer, Rosaline told her husband the story, and he forgave her for a kiss.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

How we Wiped out the Navajoes.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

It is not often that a war-party of Indians can be drawn into an ambush, but sometimes the cunning of the mountaineers is more than a match for that of their dusky foes, and they turn the tables upon them by practicing their own tactics. Such instances are rare, however, for the Indian scouts danger as readily as does the well-trained dog the game he is seeking.

But a remarkable instance of this occurred during the winter of '59, in the Wind River country, when a small band of mountain-men, who had recently armed themselves with Colt's repeating rifles, then a new weapon in those parts, were attacked by a large war-party, whom they drew into ambush and almost totally destroyed.

"I had never believed much in them new-fangled weapons," said the trapper, from whom I gathered the particulars of the desperate fight. "Nor did any of the boys think a great deal of 'em. You see, we had got used to the old long-barrel, straight-stocked rifle, and if you'll take my word for

it, that ain't no gun that's been made yet, that'll ckeke it for shootin' where dead sartinty is required. You can't fire as fast, but then, in the hands of a man that knows *how* to shoot, there is never no need of throwing away a bullet.

But, however, our party, that was thirteen of us, all told, had been up to St. Louis, and while there were overpersuaded to give up the old rifle and get a six-shooter.

"We tried 'em, down on the river, and I must say, they did do surprisin' things."

"We were going up into a dangerous country the comin' winter, the Injuns we knowed were bad, and had threatened to kill every white man that put foot into it, so we concluded to swap guns, and see what could be done in that way."

And I tell you it *was* a lucky swap, for— but I'll begin at the beginnin' and tell you how it turned out.

"We left St. Louis as well fixed a party as ever set a trap for beaver, or throwed a buffer, and, what's more, we had made a good bargain with a trader for all the pelts we could fetch in."

"Our horses war all fresh ones, got from t'other side of the river, and we made the trip in a monstrous short time, strikin' the trappin' regions in *precisely* the right time."

"Well, I needn't stop to tell you how lucky or how *unlucky* we was, but I will say that game suffered that winter worse'n they ever did afore or since."

"I never see the like of beaver and muskrats and buffer."

"Long to'ards the end of the season, a hunter from the ranges further north dropped in onto our camp with the news that the Navajoes were preparing for a thunderin' big raid. They war goin' to sweep the entire country clear of ev'ry pale-face in it, and he said we might depend that they'd not be likely to overlook our camp."

"You know, or I reckon you don't know prehaps, that we fellers who follow trappin' and huntin', for a livin', don't never see danger till it's starin' us plumb in the face. We never looks ahead arter it, and so you see we didn't set much store to what the stranger told us, but just went on 'tendin' to work and keepin' our eyes peeled fur whatever mout come up first."

"'Twas the eighth day arter we'd got the warnin', an' we war jess gettin' things ready for the mornin's feed, when Ned Sloocum, who'd been out to look arter his horse that had draw'd the picket-pin and strayed off, come tar'in' back into camp, yellin' 'Injuns!' like all natur' had bu'sted loose."

"'Thar warn't much time to prepare. The level, timmer on the right and left, and the hills back of us, mebbly a quarter away."

"We see that we couldn't hold the camp ag'in the Navajoes, especially if they kept a-comin' at us in that savaigeous kind of a way, and so, arter a short confab, we determined to fall back onto the hill-side and make a stand 'mong the rocks and trees."

"The trouble war to get thar. The Injuns watched us closer'n a painter ther's game, jess as if they expected the movement."

"It ar got to be a race, boys," said Seth Langford, the oldest head in the party, but I took a stand ag'in that, for I see it would be sarkin' destruction."

"They give in to me, and we began fallin' back slow like, ev'ry feller leadin' his horse, and ready to face about at a minit's warnin'."

"You ain't never tried retreatin' in the face of a lot of mad Injuns, young man, and in course you don't know what it means, but, I tell you, it's a tickleish thing, and tries the nerves of the oldest hand at the business."

"Lordy, how they *did* come at us! This side and that side, and ev'ry side but behind. Thar war too close quarters and they didn't ventur'."

"Boys," said I, 'at a hundred yards from the bresh, make a rush for it. Mebbly they'll follow'."

"They took in a minit, and when I give 'em the word, we mounted and war off afore the Navajoes know'd what war up."

"We struck the hill, and started up afore they made their charge, and war out o' sight behind the rocks and timmer in a jiffy."

"Sure enough, on they came, like mad devils, every imp of 'em seemin' to try and be first to the place."

"You see they war powerful worked up like. I reckon we'd killed as many as twenty of 'em afore we fell back, and they war bound to have our har'."

"At a bend in the cattle-path, a kind of a trail made over the hill by buffer and the like, we halted and jumped down, turnin' the horses loose, and scatterin' on both sides."

"'Twas as purty a ambushment as war ever laid."

"Not a man that didn't have good cover that commanded the trail up which the red devils come in a body. They were crowdin' one another, yellin' and cussin' in Injun, ev'ry mother's son wantin' to get all the skulls himself, and not 'low his neighbor any chance."

"Arter that it warn't no fight at all. It war jess slaughterin'."

"The boys that war below closed in and shot off all retreatin', while them above closed the trail so that they couldn't get for'ard. But they foun't game to the last. Not one of 'em flinched, while the six-shooters and our revolvers rained sartin death on 'em from behind every rock, and tree, and stump on that hill-side."

"At last thar warn't but about half a dozen of the Navajoes left, and nigh onto all of them war cut up more or less."

"They stood and died, all but two of 'em, like t'others had done, dead game to the last. The two made a break, and I do really b'lieve the boys let 'em get off a-purpose."

"How many men did you lose in this last fight?" I asked, as the old trapper paused.

"Nary a man, though, Seth Langford and another war purty bad hurt."

"And Ned Sloocum, what became of him?"

"He-he-he-heo!" laughed the old fellow. "Why, thar war the best part of the whole thing. About a hour, I reckon, arter the fight war over, Ned come feelin' his way back, ridin' the mustang, with the big Injun afore him, his hands tied fast and tight behind his back, and blind as a bat—the Injun, I mean."

"The Indian blind?" I exclaimed.

"Yes sir-ee! As sartin as you are a-settin' on that log, Ned had gouged both his eyes out."

RANDOM NOTES.

Pigs are divided into two classes—big pig and little pig. They are called hogs when they arrive at the more advanced stages of pork. It is a historical fact that two pigs will make more noise under a gate than one, or less; and when you find them plopping up your front yard, you are inclined to consider them the root of all evil.

Pigs are not very particular in regard to their toilets, and they don't care how many fleas they have, so they can get to scratch themselves against your newly-painted front door-step with that calm dignity of expression in their faces for which, only pigs are noted.

Pigs metamorphosed into sausages are very soothing; when they are reduced to ham they are much better. The way to make sausages is to feed them chopped meat, and then kill them; it saves labor.

Pigs are getting to be so common that they are rarely kept in the public parks now; though as curiosities they still roam the streets of some Western cities. It is not necessary to do their tails up in papers to make them curl; but a pig *will* be a hog in spite of every thing.

JOE KING.

HOME AGAIN.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

Back to the haunts of former days,
Of better and nobler years,
Where, in each spot my eye surveys,
My early youth appears!

Back to my birth-home; oh, how dear
The thought that I again am here,
To mingle with and greet once more
The friends I left on Childhood's shore!

Above me bends the same blue sky
That so inspired my spirit then,
And Brown still wears an askew eye,
As cross as an old hen.

The same bright sun above me glows,
And Jones still sports a broken nose;
And though full fast the years have flown,
Bill Smith's cork leg has never grown.

Oh, many a change has come and gone
Since in those scenes I moved before!
Though Nicodemus Swillington
Still keeps a grocery store.

And memory makes all things fair,
My pocket makes all things dear,
But Bob Legrew has lost his hair,
And well-remembered voices wake
The olden question, "What 'il you take?"

Again upon my long-lost land,
The stars are many in mine eyes,
John Dobb's mus-ache is at a stand,
In spite of all his dyes.

Those youthful days how full of hope!
And Wilkes works in a blacksmith shop,
His cheeks would scarce suggest the peach,
And at-still he at-stutters in his ep-ep-
speech.

But oh, how have I changed since last
I moved amid the happy scenes!
My very clothes have altered fast—
They once were made of je-ns.

Now hopes within a narrow place,
A change is also on my face,
It looks more manly, so to speak,
I have not shaved for quite a week.

Back to the haunts of former years,
Of better and nobler years,
Where in each face my eye surveys
What they last took appears.

They've nearly shorn a high-top off. How
Much pleased they are to see me now!
But a fer I've been here a day,
Way then, I'd better be away.

WHEN a man two-thirds drunk, and the other third not sober, complains of wrongs, don't believe him, for when the wine's in, the wine is sure to come out.

NO matter how well you may have been brought up, bad company will bring you down.

I OWE an apology to my hearers at my last lecture for pulling a dirty shirt out of my pocket instead of my handkerchief. I had no valise, for my baggage was light—though that shirt proved to be quite dark. It really made me ashamed of itself.

WHEN a man two-thirds drunk, and the other third not sober, complains of wrongs, don't believe him, for when the wine's in, the wine is sure to come out.

CATTLE are shipped to Europe by steerage.

THE roughest lie is smooth-shod, and travels without the aid of the spur, and your own shadow is not so difficult to capture.

NO day is so far away as to-morrow. It is the day that never comes. It is a far-off fairy realm, where we build our castles, yet never dare cross the threshold. Our fate is there which we are never destined to obtain—love is there which we will never feel; the fortunes which we shall never inherit are just "over there," the friends we shall make are there, never within our grasp—all the peace and rest, that is never to shine out of that mysterious day; but the misfortunes, the cold-shoulders, the kickings, how sure are they to slip through.

IF we could station in a line the different characters we assume each day, we would each make a large regiment of very small men.

A NOVELIST, describing a belle's hair as falling gracefully over her shoulders, neglected to say that it didn't stop till it got clear to the floor, and that she afterward picked it up, went into another room, and re-arranged it.

DID you never notice that when one dog began barking at night, it set a thousand others going, and that none would stop until the balance had all quit?

AT our wooden-wedding, many years ago, we received a variety of presents, consisting of a delightful wash-tub, a *recherche* box of matches, a heavily plated breakfast table, a delicious bunch of wooden tooth-picks, an elaborate rolling-pin, an armful of kindlings, tied round with a highly-twisted cord of wood, two broomsticks for wife, a good-conditioned, corn-fed saw-buck for self, a hoop-pole, a pole-kitten, some log-arithmetic, section of plank-road, a bald blacking-brush and a wooden doll-baby, all of which we received as affably as a basket full of chips.

WHEN people are in love they wear a crown of foolishness. Cupid is well represented as being a little child.

I AM sorry to say it but in the narratives of a literary friend of mine truth loses some of its principal beauties.

THIS way in which I hankered after buckwheat-cakes used to cause my mother a great deal of uneasiness when I was a boy. That hankering increases with the years. The way to eat them is thus: Get the sole control of one colored waiter with a scoop-shovel; lay the first cake flat on its back on your plate, spread on a stratum of butter to make it slide empty the molasses jug on that, and lay another cake over it all to keep it warm. Get your appetite up to as high a pitch as if you paid for your board; take a hat-expander and enlarge your mouth, in fact make yourself all mouth; divide the cakes into four sections diametrically; shut your eyes and pitch into them, or vice versa, just as if your landlady wasn't sitting at the head of the table, gritting her teeth at you to see what kind of a machine your mouth is for the destruction of buckwheat-cakes. Buckwheat-cakes, unless well made, are very apt to taste like a buttered army blanket, and weigh heavily on your conscience.

A good wife and a large dowry
Soothes many a lonely hour.

Make no remarks at the expense of others; it may some time put you to some expense yourself—for doctor's bills.

Yours, always,
BEAT TIME.